VILLAGE LIFE IN PALESTINE

G ROBINSON LEES

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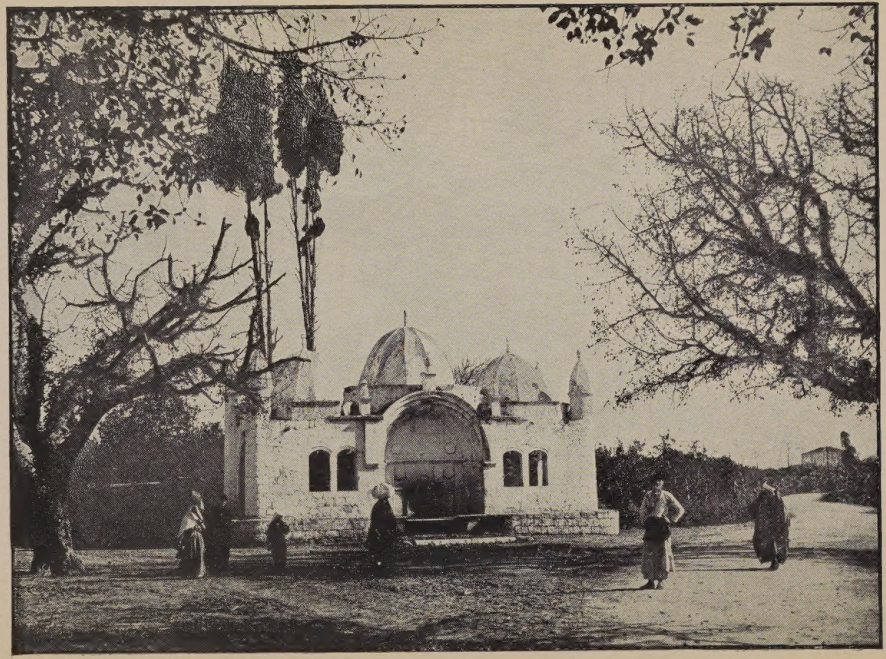

A WAYSIDE FOUNTAIN—NEAR JAFFA.

VILLAGE LIFE IN PALESTINE

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RELIGION, HOME LIFE, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, CHARACTERISTICS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE PEASANTS OF THE HOLY LAND, WITH REFERENCE TO THE BIBLE

NOV 29

BY THE

REV. G. ROBINSON LEES, B.A., F.R.G.S.

Vicar of St. Andrew's, Lambeth

AUTHOR OF "JERUSALEM ILLUSTRATED," "JERUSALEM AND ITS PEOPLE," AND JOINT-AUTHOR OF "PALESTINE" IN DR. LUNN'S GUIDE-BOOK "HOW TO VISIT THE MEDITERRANEAN"

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

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PREFACE TO NEW EDITION.

THIS Edition differs almost entirely from the FIRST. The titles of the chapters remain, but the whole book has been re-written and considerably enlarged. Many fresh Biblical illustrations have been added, and the spiritual significance of some of the manners and customs of the people has received attention, particularly in shepherd life.

At a time when the Bible is the object of severe textual criticism I hope it will not be thought inopportune to urge for consideration the confirmatory evidence of the truth of the Bible supplied by the life of the people in the land of the Bible.

An Index of Scripture references has been added at the end of the book but I have not attempted to include all Scriptural references that could be brought to bear on the subject.

Doubtless others will suggest themselves to the mind of the thoughtful reader, and I hope in this way give additional interest to the perusal of this account of the native population of the Holy Land. It is the result of study and observation during a residence of nearly six years in the country, combined with a knowledge of the language of the people enabling me to dwell amongst them and take a sympathetic interest in their pursuits.

I am indebted to Miss Meredith Brown for the use of her photograph of "The Sea of Galilee," to Mr. C. A. Hornstein of Jerusalem for "Sheep and Goats" and "Butter Making," to Mr. Simon Forest for "An Ancient Hill Altar," and to the British Syrian Mission for "Fishermen Casting their Nets" and "The Watchman"; the rest of the illustrations are from my own negatives.

G. ROBINSON LEES.

St. Andrew's Vicarage,
Lambeth, S.E.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY.

THE peasants or Fellaheen of the villages of Palestine are so intimately connected with the Holy Land of the Bible that it would be impossible to adequately describe their condition, manners, customs and religion without some reference to the land in which they live. They are the descendants of the mixed marriages of the children of Israel with the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, through whom they were led into the sin of idolatry. And when the Hebrews were carried into captivity "none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land" (2 Kings xxiv. 14). "But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen" (2 Kings xxv. 12).

The cultivation of the land has always been left in the hands of the peasant population, and the code of agricultural laws in use to-day is that which God gave to Moses for the Israelites, who brought it with them from the wilderness and introduced it to the people of Canaan (see Leviticus and Deuteronomy; Exod. xxii. 2-15; Josh. ix. 19, 23, 27; Jud. i. 21; ii. 3).

The soil is wonderfully rich and fertile. After centuries of cultivation it is still capable of yielding an abundant harvest without the aids to agriculture used in other parts of the world. It does not near the high-

ways always appear to advantage, yet the description of the "Promised Land" in the Bible is strictly appropriate.

"A good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills:

"A land of wheat, and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of oil, olive and honey" (Deut. viii. 7, 8).

The present condition of the Holy Land is not generally thought to agree with the description found in the Old Testament. But this opinion, although prevalent, is formed by a hasty survey of only a part of the country near the roads. The general appearance is certainly unfavourable, for it is sparsely populated, and only a comparatively small portion is under cultivation. A closer inspection, a more careful examination, proves, however, that the desolate condition of the country has been overestimated, and that the springs and streams mentioned in the Bible are still flowing with water.

The "brooks of water" are admitted by all scholars, who have an intimate acquaintance with the Holy Land, to be the present Wadys, filled in some cases by perennial streams, but generally dry in summer. The "fountains and depths" are the springs and deep-blue pools. When they are remote from towns and far from the roads they are surrounded by a luxuriant growth of vegetation. But the springs near the highways are the favourite camping-grounds of the caravans that march through the country; and a constant succession of people resting by the water destroys the fringe of green around the spring. A building covers the fountain in and near the towns, thus preserving the water from the

pollution of weary feet, and reserving it for quenching the thirst and supplying the wants of the people.

The Jordan is the river of the Holy Land, the only stream in the country that can be dignified by that appellation.

It is one of the most wonderful rivers in the world. There is no stream on earth so remarkable for its physical features, its sacred associations, and the marvellous events that have happened along its banks and in its waters—a combination of circumstances that establish its claim to absolute pre-eminence.

It has been intimately connected with most of the great events of Scripture history. The most astounding miracles of wondrous power and healing virtue ever witnessed have been performed along its course.

When God's judgment fell upon guilty Sodom and Gomorrah the Jordan flowed on and hid them for ever from the gaze of man. When Israel needed a passage to Canaan the hand of God divided its waters.

Around its central lake are grouped many of the loving deeds of Christ Himself. The roaring of the angry billows ceased at His command. His footsteps trod the face of the deep. Along its shores the lame walked, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the blind saw, the lepers were cleansed, and the dead were raised to life again.

There is the same singular appropriateness in the connection of the scenes of the most signal occurrences with its physical features.

The main source of the river is at Banias, where it issues from a cave in the limestone rock in one deep stream which is immediately divided by masses of rock and fallen débris. This cave was formerly dedicated to the god Pan, from whence the modern name Banias

is derived. Remains of tablets with Greek inscriptions and other signs of idolatrous worship are still visible.

Romantic spots of unusual beauty were always chosen by the heathen for their temples. This is unique in Palestine. No other part of the country is so conspicuous for the variety of its scenery. And no place that formed the scene of the Lord's ministry was so fully occupied by heathen temples and their rites and ceremonies. The situation of Banias, once Cæsarea Philippi, is incomparably fine, combining in an unusual degree the elements of grandeur and beauty. Park-like glades in undulating swells flow from the foot of giant Hermon. Wild gorges and secluded valleys rise from the town itself and are lost in the heights above. Numerous little streams, fringed with oleanders and overlooked by lofty poplars, alone break the silence of a scene of entrancing beauty.

These formed the picturesque surroundings of the worshippers of idols. How deep, then, was the significance of the manifestation of Divine glory on a spur of the mountain above the shrines of Greek, Syrian and Roman deities! The Son of God indeed put beneath His feet all the powers of evil, all false gods, all the works of men's hands whereby weak and wayward men are led into superstitious error.

This scene of the Transfiguration formed the northern limit of the Lord's ministry. From henceforth His face, as the course of the river, was set towards the south. He walked to Calvary, to the cross of shame, and then ascended from the summit of Olivet to heaven. The waters of the Jordan roll on to the Sea of Death, and from thence by evaporation are carried to the clouds above.

FISHERMEN CASTING THEIR NETS.

It rises on a level with the ocean where the mouths of other rivers are generally found. It has a triple source—is formed by three streams from three fountains.

Three stone bridges cross respectively the three divisions of the river formed by as many lakes.

The central lake is the Sea of Galilee. On the left of the entrance of the river into the silent solitary water, which is more impressive in its stillness than if it was crowded by fishing-boats and pleasure-steamers, the eastern shore stands like a wall. On the right the white strand merges into the ruins of the cities of the northern shore. There by the pebbly beach is the saddening aspect of the fulfilment of the Saviour's prophecy. In the mournful solitude amidst a mass of thorns and thistles are the remains of the cities whose people rejected His message of hope.

Beyond the heaps of stone, the scene of desolation, is the tangled garden wilderness of lovely Gennesareth, whose oleanders dip their crimson blossoms in the wavelets that ripple on the silver sand. Hard by are the mud huts of once stately Magdala, the home of Mary who followed her Lord!

The only city left on the shore of the lake is the one into which in all probability our Saviour never entered —Tiberias. It was founded by Herod Antipas—"that fox" (St. Luke xiii. 32)—who made it the capital of Galilee.

The whole length of the river in a straight line, from its source to the sea in which it is lost, is not more than 120 miles. It varies in width after it has left the Sea of Galilee from 60 to 160 feet. In its course from the lake it falls 600 feet, and its tortuous windings, over twenty-seven rapids, extend for

200 miles along the plain that is but 60 miles in length.

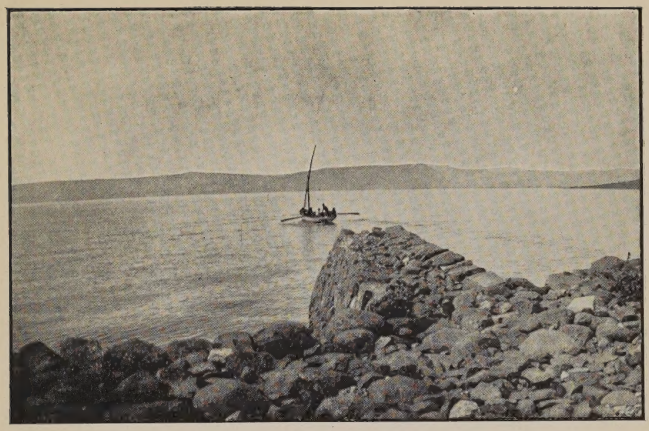
It has two distinct lines of banks. The upper banks are some distance from the channel and vary in height from 10 to 50 feet. They are very irregular. In the lower portion of the Jordan valley they are broken up for miles, presenting a most curious appearance, forming not only a system of hills, but a system of valleys, the original plain being left standing here and there isolated and forlorn, while a series of conical hills fretted by a burning sun and heavy rains increase the inextricable confusion of bank and plain.

There are fifty-six fords, but many exist in name only, and the dangerous and deceptive character of some of them is well known. A dense and almost impenetrable jungle hides in some places the pathway to the ford.

At Damieh, on the road between Nablous and Es Salt, there is a ferry, and another opposite Jericho. In 2 Samuel xix. 18 we find that "there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household".

The river overflows its banks (Joshua iii. 15) annually in accordance with its ancient custom. The wild rush of waters sweep all before them. Even if any one escaped the torrent, the banks would prevent his gaining a foothold and safety when carried beyond the regular landing-place of the ford. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, how then wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. xii. 5).

The first and by far the most important tributary of the sacred river on the left bank is the Sheriat el



THE SEA OF GALILEE.

THE COUNTRY OF THE GADARENES.

Menadhireh. As the Arabic name of the Jordan is Sheriah, El Menadhireh serves to distinguish the affluent from the principal stream, though before they unite it is larger though not longer than the Jordan. It is better known by its ancient names of Yarmuk and Hieromax, familiar to those acquainted with the country as the boundary between Gilead and Bashan. Perhaps the most interesting and certainly the most beautiful part of its course is the country of the Gadarenes.

Gadara, the city of tombs, stands on the hill above the valley. When it was held by pagan Rome its people devoted their time to pleasure and the vanities of life. They left the bracing atmosphere of their city on the hill for the enervating influence of the licentious groves on the banks of the Hieromax. Near to this part of the river remains of baths and a theatre are still to be seen. About a mile up the stream there is a small plain where numerous little brooks of hot water flow through a mass of undergrowth, where tropical plants entwine in prodigal luxuriance—even seventeen different kinds have been counted in one square yard.

More than two hundred palm trees now rise above the wilderness of rank verdure, reminding us of the time when it was a smiling garden. The side abutting the river is precipitous. Here and there a jagged limestone rock peeps through a bank of maidenhair fern, sparkling with diamond drops from the hot-water cascades that tumble through their steam into the river.

Rising above the stream is a wall of mountain, grim and grey, whose summit looks down a steep place into the Sea of Galilee. This is the grazing ground that belonged to the Gadarenes, across the river, away from

their haunts of pleasure. Yet it flanks the hills of Gergesa, furnishing us, by its position, with a satisfactory solution to the apparent discrepancy in St. Matthew viii. 28, and St. Luke viii. 37, concerning the country of the Gadarene swine.

The next tributary on the eastern bank is the Zerka, the ancient Jabbok, the scene of Jacob's flight and his encounter with the angel.

On the western side are the Kelt and Farah, both of which have been identified as the Brook Cherith, but the former is considered to have far the stronger claim to that distinction.

There are at least twelve perennial streams that flow into the Jordan and Dead Sea, yet the greater part of the valley is like a desert. A blight is on the land which cannot be removed until a more settled form of government and more civilising Power takes possession of the country.

Before Lot left the uplands of Judæa he "lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, and was even as the garden of the Lord" (Gen. xiii. 10).

In no country similar in extent is there such a diversity of climate, for in the space that could be traversed by an English express train in less than three hours there is a semitropical region and one of perpetual snow; where rice, indigo, cotton, sugar, wheat, barley, and all kinds of fruits, from bananas, dates, oranges, lemons to pears may be grown.

If the land were under proper cultivation and full of people, probably a greater variety of productions might be grown, and in greater quantity than in any other country of the same size in the world. There is

THE RIVER JORDAN.

A BROOK BY THE WAY.

no natural product of the country mentioned in the Bible not found in modern Palestine.

The climate of the Holy Land is variable. Along the coast it is hot and the air is stifling. Even in the hills it is extremely trying though the thermometer seldom rises above 95° in the shade; whilst in March, April, July and August a refreshing breeze from the west blows nearly all day long.

The "hot sun" and "heat" are mentioned in the Bible (Exod. xvi. 21; Isa. xlix. 10).

The dangers of the climate arise principally from the unsatisfactory condition of all sanitary arrangments, but the Sirocco's breath is depressing, and cold winds with the hot sun in autumn bring fever and ague.

Rain usually begins to fall towards the end of October; in November thunderstorms are frequent and usually about Christmas the weather is stormy. It is said in 2 Sam. xxiii. 20: "Benaiah . . . slew a lion in a pit in the time of snow," and we find "snow," "wintry storm and tempest" referred to in the Psalms.

Towards the end of the wet season in the spring of 1893 more than thirty pilgrims died on the roadside between Jerusalem and Nablous from exhaustion caused by the inclemency of the weather.

In January the heaviest rains fall, followed often by a spell of fine weather, but it is never settled until the early April showers are over.

The curious assumption that the "former and latter rain" were distinct wet seasons has led many to suppose that the rainfall has decreased. And some unpractical people have asserted that for a long period the latter rain ceased until missionary work commenced in the country.

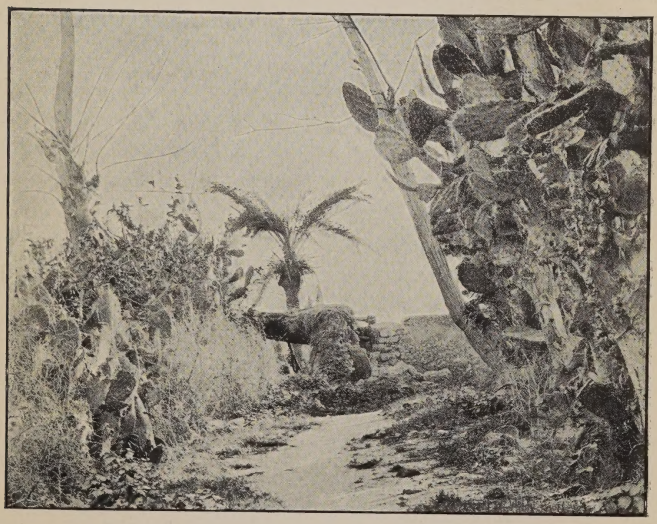
"It has been remarked by a careful observer that, as a rule, the seasons occur in a cycle, becoming yearly wetter and wetter for a certain period, then growing drier and drier until a year of drought arrives."

In 1 Kings xvii. 7: "There had been no rain in the land," "the brook dried up," and the country was nearly destitute of water. In 1 Kings xviii. 5: "And Ahab said to Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks; peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we may not lose all the beasts".

A very curious feature is here mentioned. "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink: for there is a sound of abundance of rain" (1 Kings xviii. 41).

When the summer is over, and rain is expected, there first appears a strong wind; it whistles over the hills and through the valleys, round the houses in the villages and along the road. The people then perceive there is a sound of abundance of rain and the more the noise the greater is the shower. The rainfall of Judæa has an average of twenty-eight inches. And though towards the end of the summer there is a scarcity of water, it is not due to a scanty supply, but to the sad condition of the receptacles for preserving the needful rain. The wells in many places are filled with stones, and the pools around Jerusalem are useless either through broken walls or heaps of rubbish. In the days of our Lord they were filled with water for we read of the Pool of Bethesda where the impotent man was cured (St. John v. 4), and of the Pool of Siloam where Jesus sent the blind man, whom He had healed, to wash (St. John ix. 7). The aqueducts made by Solomon to

JERUSALEM IN WINTER.



A COUNTRY LANE IN SPRING.

convey water from the pools he constructed to supply the people of the city of Jerusalem with water still exist, but with broken walls that clearly show how little they are used.

The irrigatory system of the plain along the coast has been demolished. Drains and all sanitary arrangements fail to carry out the measures once promoted for the health of the people. Those near the sea are choked, and swamps of a pestilential nature have been formed around them.

Palestine is a mountainous country but it does not contain any number of independent mountain chains dividing one region from another. From the Lebanon on the north, to beyond Hebron on the south, there is one continuous range running down the centre of the country, varying in height from 2,000 to 3,000 feet. The mountains slope more gradually towards the maritime plain on the west than the Jordan valley on the east. Their sides are furrowed with deep ravines, narrow valleys, and torrent beds down which in winter rush innumerable little streams. Many of the passes are steep and dangerous, especially towards the Jordan valley, where the slope is very abrupt and the ravines deeper and wider. In the south the mountains are rugged and barren, but in the north the soil is better cultivated and the hills are greener; while across the Jordan the hills are covered with vegetation except on the sides that look toward the river.

The surface of the country has four plainly marked physical features:—

1. The maritime plain along the coast. This long stretch of country bordering the sea is broken by the range of Carmel, the only line of hills that runs in one

straight line from east to west. It stands as a sentinel on the northern extremity of the plain of Sharon, 14 miles in length, rising from 600 to 1,800 feet in height, covered with a dense brushwood of oak, terebinth laurel, arbutus and carob in its wilder parts, olive trees and vineyards near the inhabited portions. It abounds in game. Wild animals, hyena, jackal, wild boar and gazelle shelter in the rocky dells of the deep recesses of the mountains. They are also found in the central range of hills wherever cover enables them to conceal their retreat. Bears are only seen on Mount Hermon and lions have been known to approach within a day's journey of Damascus.

The interest of Carmel is centred in the Prophet Elijah. A very trustworthy tradition has long fixed the scene of his sacrifice as recorded in 1 Kings xviii. 20, at the farthest end from the sea. The tradition is confirmed by the nature of the surroundings, a terrace and a natural amphitheatre commanding a view of the plain of Esdraelon to Jezreel on the east, and the sea from a peak nearer the summit on the west, a locality marked by the significant and suggestive name of El Mukrakah—"the burning," "the sacrifice". The presence of a small perennial spring containing a species of mollusc found only where there is a never-failing supply of fresh water in the vicinity, and the distance and easy access to Jezreel, twenty miles along the plain, satisfactorily establish the identity of this place with the site of the overthrow of Baal's priests and the triumph of the Lord of Hosts.

From Carmel to Jaffa the plain has changed considerably in appearance. Even in the Middle Ages brushwood and timber, especially oak, covered this part of the

country. Scattered portions of woodland still remain but the disappearance of the Forest of Sharon and Wood of Assur (Arsuf) is an indisputable fact.

Jaffa is surrounded by orange trees from whence £80,000 worth of fruit is exported annually. The open country is cultivated, the soil being especially rich in the south. Groves of palm trees present a very oriental aspect to the Bay of Acca, and a few solitary specimens break the dull monotony of the lowlands until Philistia is reached, where dates are grown.

2. A central range of mountains which occupy the greater portion of the country and is intersected by small plains, deep ravines and narrow gorges.

The northern heights, upper Galilee, form the most picturesque and healthy part of Palestine. As we descend the appearance of the hills denotes a fertile region. The soil is rich. Woods cover the slopes of Tabor and the many coloured flowers of Galilee "clothe the grass of the field".

The "Great Plain" Esdraelon is watered by numerous springs and produces quantities of corn.

Nazareth is the principal town in Galilee and owes its present importance and position almost entirely to its connection with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Samaria, the central part of the country, furnishes the best oil, and might well be regarded as the richest part of the land. The villages are well built of stone, surrounded by olive groves, and well-tilled fields. Nablous, the Neapolis of the Romans, and Shechem of the Hebrews, has no rival in Palestine for beauty of situation. Hemmed in a narrow valley by two lofty mountains, Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south, watered by eighty springs, well supplied with gardens and groves,

and swept by the balmy breezes of the lowland and bracing winds of its lofty heights, it enjoys one of the most picturesque and fortunate sites the Holy Land can offer, and appears to be the natural capital of the country.

The acoustic properties of the valley referred to in Joshua viii. 30-35 have been derided by many people who have had neither time nor inclination to test them. Even Christians anxious for evidence to support Divine testimony have failed to believe in the possibility of the truth of the statement that one half of the Israelites stood "over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal" while the law was read to them from the opposite mountains.

There need be no longer any doubt. From loftier peaks in the Lebanon, across wider and deeper valleys, it is customary to carry on an ordinary conversation in a high-pitched voice developed and controlled by practice. The dry atmosphere of Palestine carries sound to an amazing distance.

As the hill country of the south is approached well cultivated fields are left behind. The hills of Judæa are more brown and bare than the rest of the central mountainous region, though Hebron is still famous for its vines.

3. The valley of the Jordan, the most remarkable feature in the country, as it is everywhere below the level of the ocean. The "Ghor," its modern designation, is the greatest natural depression of the earth's crust, being 1,296 feet below the Mediterranean where the river Jordan enters the Sea of Lot (Bahr Lût), the Arabic name of the Dead Sea. There is nothing in nature like it. Though only six miles across its northern

THE JORDAN VALLEY—JERICHO PLAIN.

part, it attains a width of twenty miles near the mouth of the river where it is often called the Jericho Plain.

Where patches of ground are cultivated the yield from the fertile soil is abundant, as is seen in the excellent crops of millet and wheat and barley. Rice, indigo and sugar might be grown with ease: the first named has been tried and the experiment proved most successful.

Weeds and thistles flourish everywhere. Fresh green grass borders the streams all the year round, except in parts where the oleander spreads its branches and sheds its blossoms, and where the weeds grow rank and high.

The Jordan valley is now a wilderness. "The climate in autumn is deadly, and in summer the heat makes it uninhabitable," says Colonel Conder.

Josephus specially notes the richness of its soil and calls it "a region fit for the gods".

4. The tableland beyond the Jordan stretches away into the desert and contains several mountain chains rising above the plateau. Looking across the Jordan valley from Jerusalem it seems like a wall of hills. The topmost peak is Nebo, from whence Moses viewed the promised land. Moab is the least promising part of Eastern Palestine; its southern portion is practically desert but as it approaches Gilead the scene is changed. There is a wild grandeur in the trackless hills of the north; and perhaps no part of the country can boast so fair a vale as Wady Seir. Gilead is the most beautiful. Forest and valley, well-clothed heights and open glades are the most prominent features of the landscape.

Bashan was once the scene of great activity, of large

cities and cultivated fields. Its rolling plains and rocky mountains still contain specimens of the oak of Bashan, but over the whole of the province the Mohammedan host swept with its army, and smiling fields and populous towns have since become the prey of desolation.

In the Holy Land proper on the west of the Jordan the devastation of war has laid low many a town on the hills and in the plain. Oppression following in its wake crumbled the remaining walls and crushed the hope of the people for ever. Whole villages have been depopulated, and the fields around left to the weeds and thistles. Only where the inhabitants find that the labour of their hands is moderately safe from the grasp of the tax-gatherer do they cheerfully till the soil: and the amount of security can be gauged by the care that is spent on the vineyard or the field.

The sparsity of trees has often been given as the reason why the land is bare and brown, but we are never led to suppose that Canaan was a land of trees and forests, yet there is no doubt that much vegetation has disappeared. "Sycamore" trees still remain in many places, and the "Terebinths" of the valley of Elah (*i.e.*, Terebinth) are fewer in number but still some of the finest trees in Palestine.

Forest does not necessarily imply timber trees, but rather copse or brushwood. "The trees of Scripture," says Colonel Conder, the Palestine explorer, "oak, terebinth, fir, sycamore, cedar, box, olive, fig and acacia are still the trees of the country." The character of the wooded growth is unchanged; but the districts covered by "wood" have on the whole materially decreased. This naturally follows where the government of the

A VILLAGE IN WADY SEIR.

country has placed little or no restriction on the removal of brushwood and timber.

The people have so long been accustomed to cut down trees, that in spite of a rigorous law now in force for their preservation, beams of wood still find their way into the market. Roots that form the fuel show there must have been at one time more trees than there are now. In Gilead away from the roads there is abundant growth of forest, the woods in some places being too dense for the passage of a horse and rider; and since the advent of the Circassians in Wady Seir there are saw mills, and inch boards are now brought from over the Jordan to Jerusalem and sold to carpenters in the city.

All the natural products mentioned in the Bible are found in modern Palestine. The fruits of the earth are grown in plenty. There is not a day in the year when fresh fruit cannot be purchased in Jerusalem and grapes in the season are sold at a halfpenny per lb. Oranges from Jaffa are found in the towns in winter until apricots appear in the spring. These are followed by peaches, plums, nectarines, prickly pears, figs, melons, bananas and grapes.

They show the fruitful land.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELIGION OF THE FELLAHEEN OF PALESTINE.

THE occupation of a country by a conquering race has seldom produced results as meagre as the sway of the Moslem in the heritage of the Jew. Palestine to-day, in spite of the thraldom of the Mohammedan despot, exhibits features so nearly akin to the country of the Prophets, the land of the Kings of Israel, and the earthly home of Jesus, that manners and customs so vividly portrayed in the Bible are plainly visible. A mere passing acquaintance, however, will not disclose the superstitions of the peasant population, but rather convey the erroneous impression that they are good Moslems with an elementary knowledge of the faith cherished by a fervent desire to live in accordance with its practices. This profession of Mohammedanism is but the superstructure, if one might use the term, of a building whose foundation is raised on the aboriginal mind.

The idolatrous nations that dwelt in the land when the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness to take possession were destined by God for destruction, but His commands were soon forgotten (Judges i. 21; ii. 3). Instead of exterminating the people of the land and working the soil themselves according to the code of laws for agriculture provided by God, they gave these rules to the peasants, making them "hewers of wood

and drawers of water" (Joshua ix. 27)—their farm labourers! The contact and association thus formed for their observance eventually led the Jews into the sin of idolatry which culminated in their expulsion. The long ascendancy of the Israelites, however, had left on the aboriginal inhabitants an impression so indelibly marked that it is their most noticeable feature at the present day. Their manner of life was always the same, so rooted were they to the soil; and so satisfactory were the conditions of labour to new rulers that no real change has ever taken place in the cultivation of the land.

When the Arabs came in A.D. 637 they settled in towns and not in the country districts, and left untouched the civilization already existing, simply adding a new faith, the faith of Islam, which they believed was something better than the effete religion of the dying Byzantine Kingdom so powerless to stem the torrent of their wild rush from the desert.

Unlike the children of Israel, who also came over the Jordan, they provided no rules for the cultivation of the soil. The only land the conquerors had ever known was the sand of the desert. Conquest meant to them the power of sharing the wealth they had not created, but for which they had fought and won at the point of the sword. They were glad to leave things as they found them, to allow the peasants so intimately connected with the soil to continue to till it, as former conquerors had done, providing for the same share of the produce, which is still collected in exactly the same way. They retained all those who were able to minister to their wants, the workers in the towns as well as the farmers in the country.

But this reward was not the only object of their invasion. As soldiers imbued with a mission they considered the proclamation of their creed as necessary as the gathering of the spoils of war; and with the same impetuous zeal that had distinguished their march into the country they compelled all who were not in strict communion with the Jewish and Christian sects of the towns to adopt the faith of the new Prophet.

To force in an abrupt manner a new religious system on a people long used to one apparently well suited to their manner of life, modified only by the growth of years, without the requisite teaching necessary for the formation of a substantial belief in the new doctrine, was similar to the application of a coat of varnish to an article made of wood. Had the same tolerance been allowed that former conquerors observed, it would soon have entirely disappeared.

But all have been constrained up to the present day to openly confess the Mohammedan faith, yet they are as far, with few exceptions, from a knowledge of the tenets of that creed as the day on which their forefathers meekly received the command to adopt the new religion. If the restrictions, that are not supposed in diplomatic circles to exist, were withdrawn, and missionary enterprise allowed full scope, there would soon be a remarkable change in the ideas and position of the Fellaheen of the Holy Land. Though the Gospel is permitted to be preached, and missionaries are allowed to teach the people, yet the disabilities under which they labour are little understood by their own countrymen in England, and unfortunately an explanation and exposure in a publication likely to appear before the

Turkish Censor would do more harm than good, as all matter referring to the administration of any Turkish province, particularly Palestine, is subject to the scrutiny of unfriendly eyes, unfriendly to English workers and writers.

It would be manifestly unsafe for a Moslem to openly acknowledge Christ as his Master, so there are few converts to be found who have been received into the Church of Christ. Many have been awakened by the spread of the truth, to them indeed a strange revelation, and by a method as alien in its nature to all former movements as the religion of love is to the barbaric teaching of the sword and spear. But the time has not yet arrived for their open confession, and until that day dawns we shall have to wait with prayerful patience. No temporal protection could be given, and the faith of an old-world peasant is not sufficiently strong to believe in a spiritual care that comes from God in many and various ways for the relief of His people.

The present worship is Moslem in name only. The long Mohammedan dominion has, however, lent to the practices of the peasants quite enough ritual to hide their own beliefs under acts with names that outwardly preserve an appearance of the faith of Islam.

Every Ottoman subject that turns to the Kiblah at Mecca is firmly convinced that he is a Moslem, and in every act of devotion, every superstitious belief, pilgrimage, fast and festival he only carries out the injunctions of the Prophet. In reality he knows nothing of that religion unless he has been educated in the schools of the cities, privileges never granted to Fellaheen. Indeed peasants living far from cities in remote country

districts do not even know how to say their prayers. They keep no Sabbath, there comes for them no day of rest. Day after day, week after week, their work continues, with little or no interruption but that which may be directly connected with their lives of toil.

They are practically heathen, believing in charms both manifold and curious, holy tombs, sacred groves, strange places set apart for devotional purposes, and spirits with good or evil intent. It is through these and the rites and ceremonies connected therewith that we see a remnant of the idolatry of the aboriginal inhabitants, the relics of the false worship that led the children of Israel astray.

Almost every hill in Central or Southern Judæa has resting on its summit a tomb-house, or wely, a small building with a white dome, often shaded by a green tree. Sometimes there is a solitary tree or a tree with a walled enclosure. These isolated trees on mountain tops are looked upon as sacred, and rags and threads hang from their branches as votive offerings to the saint who is connected with the spot. (The tomb of a holy man is treated in the same way). This is a makâm, or "sacred place," the origin of which is now concealed by its having been placed under the protection of some Mohammedan saint, whose name has even been adopted as the signification of the district. This intimate connection of names and places is found in the Canaanite and Phœnician mythology, which was remarkable for the number of its local divinities, and this explains why Moses was not content with the mere destruction of pagan altars, but insisted on the total abolition of their names. "And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break down their pillars, and

burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place" (Deut. xii. 3). We know how this command was disregarded, and the consequent intermarriage with the natives, false worship and fall of the Israelites.

Another point of religious resemblance is the worship of female divinities which was common amongst the Canaanites and is still practised, many modern Kubbehs (domes) being consecrated to women. In certain cases there is a duality, the Wely or Neby (Prophet) being venerated in conjunction with a woman who passes generally for his sister or daughter. This relationship, originally conjugal, which has been changed by Moslems into one of consanguinity, offers an equivalent to the sexual symmetry brought to light by the researches of Conder and De Vogüë.

Sacred groves may still be found on the mountain sides, and here the peasants feel they are on holy ground, that some unseen power is in possession; that a spirit guards and protects the spot and everything placed among the trees within the enclosure. Ploughs and other agricultural implements are often left by their owners in the grove for greater security than their homes afford. And so great is their dread of the spirit guardian that if a stolen plough is put there by the thief, the real owner dare not remove it for fear of incurring the displeasure of the unseen protector of the holy place.

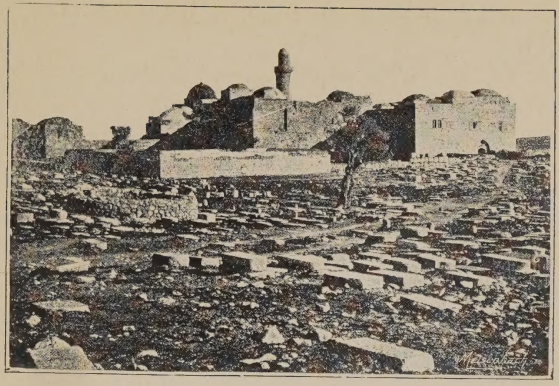
The names of most of the prophets of the Old Testament are familiar to the peasants, and they hold them in great veneration, fearing their punishment more than the direct interference of God, although they think they

can only act according to God's will. They further believe that the prophets are patrons of certain districts where they have particular abodes.

Neby Daud, *i.e.*, the Prophet David, meaning the place of the prophet, for here is the Wely, the so-called tomb of King David, is a Moslem shrine annually visited by a large number of people. No doubt, in more ancient times it was one of the "high places" of the Jebusites, and the seat of their pagan worship. Its position as a central hill of commanding appearance was a sufficient recommendation in itself, but below it, separated by a narrow gorge, was one of lower elevation, overlooking the spring of living water known now as the Virgin's Fountain, on which the citadel of the people stood. Is it merely a strange coincidence, then, that its captor's name should, after the lapse of so many centuries, be retained as the appellation of the spot where they practised their sacred rites, and where similar ceremonies are now conducted round the place supposed by some to contain his bones?

Through the many eventful years since that time can be traced the solemn mysteries that were associated with these particular places. In 1 Sam. i. 2 we read of Hannah, a Hebrew peasant woman, journeying to God's holy place at Shiloh, and there praying that her barrenness may cease, and making a vow to the Lord.

The feelings of peasant women have not changed. A similar desire is prevalent, and who can wonder when the only love a woman ever knows is that which she gives to others, to her children first and sometimes to their father. She dreads the derisive laugh, the finger of scorn so often pointed at the "childless one,"



NEBY DAUD—A HOLY PLACE.

A HOLY MAN.

and longs to fondle an infant of her own. Hannah's hope has been kindled in many a breast in modern times; her story might often be repeated. Every woman believes that the "Prophet" David will intercede on behalf of all who wish for children. They pray to God through him and think if they make a vow and keep it he can obtain for them their heart's desire.

One summer afternoon, before the sun had spent its power on the brown earth and sunk behind the western hills, I saw a woman toiling along the stony road leading from the north to the Holy City. She dragged behind her a struggling lamb which seemed to resent the unusual treatment and increase her labour. Overcome by the heat she called at a house by the way, asked for a drink of water and permission to rest. Full of gratitude for the kindness displayed and without the least hesitation she began to speak of her journey, its object and destination. I had by this time approached the same dwelling, having some acquaintance with its inmates, little thinking that I should hear the recital of a story so full of interest and resembling so closely that of the mother of Samuel. She said she was on her way to Neby Daud to offer up the lamb in fulfilment of a vow she had made to God. Her husband had taken another wife who bore him children, while she his first wife was barren. Unable any longer to endure her affliction she resolved to visit Neby Daud and pray for a son, and vowed that if her prayer was answered, she would offer up a lamb as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The offering of a sacrifice is the highest act of worship known to a peasant; the one great sign of reverence and devotion; the propitiation whereby he is able to gain access to the ear of God through the saint who

is the guardian of the place on which the sacrifice is offered.

But certain use is made of a sacrifice that cannot be considered a religious function, though to the mind of the peasant there is no perceptible difference. When the lamb is slain by the Sheikh or guardian of the "holy place," and its flesh distributed amongst the poor, as in the case of the woman above mentioned, a special act of thanksgiving is performed. If a feast is made and the poor called to eat after the relations and friends, on the occasion of the birth of a son, or the return of a relation from a journey, the act of thanksgiving is not associated with a "holy place" but it is closely connected with a holy purpose (see story of the Prodigal Son, St. Luke xv. 23-34).

Sometimes a lamb is taken by one man to show respect and devotion to another. This custom, called "Kawad," a word derived from the *leading* of the sacrifice, is not looked upon as a religious ceremony though it usually ends in a feast and may be the fulfilment of a vow or pledge. It is often used as an opportunity for making peace, a sign of reconciliation between neighbours and friends whose relations have been strained by strife and bloodshed; and often other motives of personal interest are attached, for the one that "leads" the sacrifice expects to receive a reward, which according to custom must be a garment.

Not only are there "high places" (three hundred are known) and "sacrifices" still in use, but almost every village has its "holy man". He may be a reputed descendant of Mohammed, a Hadji, a Mecca pilgrim with a green turban around his head, or the village "natural".

According to local ideas a fool, madman, or idiot is a person whose mind is in heaven, and therefore he is not responsible for what he may do on earth. He is in fact a "holy man," and sometimes a Dervish. The members of this order belong to a secret society that exercises immense influence throughout the whole Mohammedan world. They are messengers as well as pilgrims, and are treated with a respect that is seldom accorded to the highest officers of State. A real Dervish is expected to renounce all earthly possessions and subsist on the charity of the "faithful". The tenets, rules and ceremonies of the Dervishes are not divulged to the uninitiated, but their methods are copied and their reputation for sanctity is assumed by the "holy men" of the villages. The relations of a "holy man" seldom fail to appreciate the acquisition of so valuable a source of income. But he may not always be amenable to their care and insidious attention. It is a lucrative profession, and one of position and eminence, particulary appropriate to those who have a natural disinclination to work. But a dignity so great as that of a "holy man" requires support. The praise and adulation of ignorant men, the liberty of action allowed by all, men and women alike, encourage the "holy man" to pursue his calling.

The sanctity of the individual increases in the ratio of his extraordinary proceedings. Ragged and ridiculous clothing is the essential garb of holiness so patent and this must be accompanied by the manners of a fool.

To attract further attention the "holy men" cut themselves with knives and other weapons. The degree of respect depends on the position they have attained in the art of self-torture.

Here then we have the modern representatives of the "prophets of Baal," as well as the "high places" and "groves" (see 1 Kings xviii. 28). To honour a "holy place" is a proceeding clearly allied to the manner of worship of the priests of Baal. Not one but many Dervishes are necessary; "holy men" alone are not supposed to know how to conduct the ceremony. It must be performed on a Thursday night, the beginning of the Moslem Sabbath and most holy part of the week. A crowd of villagers follow the performers to the "makâm"; some help to light the lamps and kindle the fires, others beat the village drums. A circle is cleared to give the "holy men" space enough to excite the spirit of the departed saint, while the glare of lights, sharply outlined against the dark blue of the Eastern sky, invites the people at a distance as well as the supporters of the local priests. The spectators continue to increase until representatives of all the surrounding hamlets are able to avail themselves of the opportunity of showing their appreciation of the merits of the "saint," whose unseen presence regards with favour the desire of the people to do him honour.

Then the leader of the Dervishes with a melancholy voice begins by saying: "Allah da'im Allah"—"God is everlasting," followed by a second, a third of his order, and finally with moving bodies and whirling arms all join in the cry, which increases in intensity as the excitement moves the "holy men," until they are no longer able to repeat all the words. A change is then made to "Allah hei"—"God is living". The frenzy of the Dervishes grows until they can only utter the word "hei" in short sharp gasps, and then in frantic rage they cast from the place all who are supposed to be

unclean, any one that is not apparently awed by their passion, or any intrusive stranger who appears to be actuated by no better motive than curiosity.

There is no abatement of their fury until nature is overcome, and one by one they fall exhausted on the ground, wet with perspiration and overwhelmed by the violence of their emotions. As soon as they are able to rise they continue their religious exercises through the hours of darkness till the dawn, that destroys the weird characteristics of the "Zikr," creeps over the hills and disperses the crowd.

Mohammedan Ritual.

A brief account of the precepts of the Moslem religion and the details of its ritual as practised by the devout followers of the Prophet will reveal the difficulties that confront the ignorant peasant.

The "five pillars or foundations of Moslem practices" are:—

I. The recital of the creed or Kalimah daily: "There is no Deity but God, and Mohammed is the Apostle of God".

II. Salât, the five daily periods of prayer, *viz.*:—

1. From dawn to sunrise.
2. Noon.
3. Middle of afternoon.
4. Sunset.
5. One and a half hours after sunset.

III. Thirty days, fast of Ramadan.

IV. Almsgiving.

V. Hadj: Pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Mueddin of a city calls the time for prayer from a minaret or housetop, in a pleasing chant, and those

who are unable to go to the mosque throw down their cloak or carpet in the most convenient place. Mohammedans object to bells as a call to worship. They prefer the human voice, God's gift. Christians in Jerusalem for a long time were compelled to use gongs, made in some cases of wood, like planks, and beaten with sticks.

Blind men are preferred as Mueddins in the Moslem quarter as they are unable to see the women.

The call to prayer—"the adân"—is chanted as follows:—

"*Allahu akbar*"—"God is most great".

(This is said four times.)

"*Ashadan la ilaha illallah*"—"I testify that there is no Deity but God" (twice).

"*Ashadna Mohammed rasool allah*"—"I testify that Mohammed is the Apostle of God" (twice).

"*Heiyah ala salah*"—"Come to prayer" (twice).

"*Heiyah ala felah*"—"Come to security" (twice).

"*Allahu akbar*"—"God is most great" (twice).

"*La ilaha illallah*"—"There is no Deity but God".

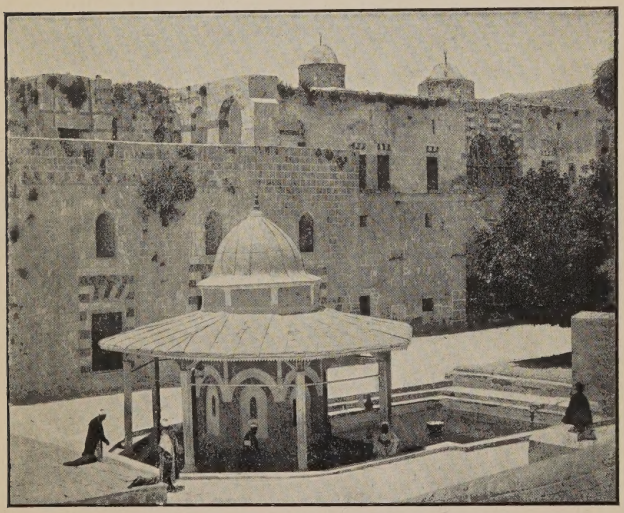
Mohammed says: "Prayer is the Pillar of Religion and the Key of Paradise," and "the practice of Religion is founded on cleanliness, which is one half of faith and the key of prayer, without which it will not be heard of God".

The Ablution.

All true Moslems attach great importance to the ablution—"el wudoo"—before prayer.

The hands have to be washed three times and during the operation the following sentences are repeated: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

AN ANCIENT HILL ALTAR. [*See page* 34.



THE ABLUTION—WASHING FOR PRAYER.

Peace to God, who hath sent down water for purification, and made El Islam to be a light and a conductor, and a guide to Thy gardens, the gardens of delight, and to Thy mansion, the mansion of peace".

The mouth must be rinsed three times and the words used as follows: "O God, assist me in the reading of Thy book, and in commemorating Thee, and in thanking Thee, and in worshipping Thee well".

The nostrils are then cleansed three times, after which is said: "O God, make me to smell the odours of Paradise, and bless me with its delights: and let me not smell the fires of hell". The face is washed three times. saying: "O God, whiten my face with Thy light on the day when Thou shalt whiten the faces of Thy favourites: and do not blacken my face on the day when Thou shalt blacken the faces of Thine enemies".

The right arm and elbow are then washed and the following words repeated: "O God, give me my book in my right hand and reckon with me an easy reckoning".

The left hand and arm are then cleansed while repeating: "O God, do not give me my book in my left hand, nor behind my back: and do not reckon with me a difficult reckoning: nor allow me to be one of the people for the fire". The right hand must be drawn over the head as the left hand raises the turban and the action is accompanied by the supplication: "O God, cover me with Thy mercy, and pour down Thy blessing upon me: and shade me under the shadow of Thy covering on the day when there shall be no shade but its shade". The beard is then combed with the wet fingers and the tips passed round the ears as the believer says: "O God, make me to hear what is good and obey what is best". The hand is drawn round the neck during the

repetition of: "O God, make my neck free from the fire and keep it from chains and fetters". The final act is the washing of the feet and ankles, the right foot first with the petition: "O God, make my feet stand firm on the Sirât (the bridge from earth to heaven) when feet shall slip": then the left foot, saying: "O God, make my labour approved, my sin forgiven and my works accepted, by Thy pardon, O mighty One, and Thy mercy, O merciful One".

The ablution is then finished, but the worshipper should look up to heaven and say: "Thy perfection, O God, with Thy praise I extol: I testify that there is no God but Thou alone: Thou hast no companion: I implore Thy forgiveness, and turn to Thee with repentance"; and then to the earth and conclude with: "I testify that there is no Deity but God, and that Mohammed is the Apostle of God".

It is scarcely necessary to add that the above ceremony is never performed by the Fellaheen; even devout Moslems of the cities hurry over their ablutions, repeating only portions of the petitions in an undertone which is almost inaudible.

Prayer.

The performance of prayer is still more elaborate. The cloak or carpet is spread on the ground if the prayer is said in the open air, and the worshipper turns towards Mecca, the point of adoration (Kiblah). In the mosque the Imam leads, and the congregation follow his devotions. This more often happens among the Moslems who cannot remember the requisite postures, as each performance consists of a number of

INTERIOR OF MOSQUE.

MOSLEMS AT PRAYER.

inclinations of the head called "re'kâhs," which varies according to the time of day.

The worshipper first stands upright with both hands open and raised to the side of the head, the thumbs touching the ears; and, looking towards Mecca, he utters the "tekbeer," *i.e.*, "Allahu akbar"—"God is most great"—then proceeds to recite the prayers of the prescribed number of rek'âhs. He clasps the left with the right hand just below his girdle, fixes his eyes on the spot where his head will touch the ground, and repeats the "Fat'hah," or opening chapter of the "Koran," and after it three or four verses. He then says: "God is most great," and inclines his head, bending his body until his hands rest upon his knees, with his fingers slightly open. In this posture he says: "I extol the perfection of my Lord, the Great" (three times), adding: "May God hear him who praiseth Him. Our Lord, praise be unto Thee." He then raises his head slightly, and drops gently on his knees, repeating: "God is most great". As he leans forward to place his hands on the ground he says: "God is most great". He puts his nose, then forehead, on the ground between his hands, saying: "I extol the perfection of my Lord, the Most High" (three times). He raises his head and body and sinks backward on his heels, and placing his hands on his thighs, says: "God is most great," and repeats the formula again as he bends his head a second time to the ground. During this prostration there is a repetition of the words used in the first. When he raises his head the prayers of one rek'âh are completed with the "tekbeer"—"Allahu akbar"—"God is most great".

The worshipper then rises to his feet without remov-

ing his toes from the position in which they had first been placed and continues until every rek'âh is finished. After the last rek'âh, before rising, he sits on his left foot and says: "Praises are to God, and prayers and good works. Peace be on thee, O Prophet, and the mercy of God, and His blessings. Peace be on us and on all the righteous worshippers of God." Then raising the first finger of his right hand repeats: "I testify that there is no Deity but God; and I testify that Mohammed is His servant and His Apostle," and finally looks upon his right shoulder and says: "Peace be on you and the mercy of God". This salutation is supposed to be addressed to the angels that attend every true believer, numbering according to different Mohammedan theologians from two to a hundred.

A very devout worshipper will repeat more than the requisite prayers. The time occupied by four rek'âhs and additional repetitions is about five minutes. There are many Moslems unable to perform even a portion of a rek'âh. I had a servant who knew the "tekbeer," "God is most great," and when we reached a town in our wanderings, where prayer was made, he repeated the tekbeer with whatever prostrations he could remember lest the people should think that his connection with me had made him a Christian. If his mistakes were discovered he said he was a Bedawy, and "the Bedawin are too ignorant to pray, they only know how to fight".

Ramadan.

Every Moslem must observe the fast of Ramadan in the ninth month of the year. The Mohammedan year like that of the Jews is calculated according to

the revolutions of the moon, numbering 354 days, and when compared with the corresponding date of our own year returns every following year eleven days earlier.

The thirty days' fast imposed on the Mohammedans is more severe in summer than in winter, on account of the heat. The rich natives of Jerusalem find no difficulty in keeping the fast. They turn night into day. As the fast lasts from dawn to sunset, and all adults are strictly enjoined to abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking, they rest when they cannot eat, and sleep when not allowed to smoke. The poor labourers suffer great hardship, being unable to dispense with sleep in the night on account of the labour of the day. When the fast was first instituted all work during the day was discontinued, but there were then few of another creed engaged in business. The burden was also lighter because originally only ten days of the month were set apart for fasting, but doubts having been expressed about the part of the month that was meant to be kept, religious zeal suggested the whole of it for the satisfaction of all.

It is a time of repentance, and is somewhat similar to "Lent" in its purpose. The really pious observe the season very seriously and honestly. To all it is a solemn time, and even the careless and indifferent are compelled by public opinion to follow the custom.

Before the fast begins extensive purchases are made to prevent as much as possible the necessity for buying and selling during the month of abstinence. Debts are collected, sometimes when not quite due, and every Mohammedan creditor will make the approach of Ramadan an excuse for professing to be in need of money.

The Fellaheen living near Jerusalem are influenced by the customs of the city. The season of the year interferes with the operations of trade and compels them to notice the "fast," but the peasants residing far from the city have little regard for the lapse of time. The commencement of Ramadan is decided by the sight of the new moon. The Mufti formerly gave notice, but the actual time for beginning the fast is announced by telegraph from Constantinople. As soon as the message has been received a big gun is fired from the fortress. The boom of the cannon is heard twice daily—before sunrise to warn the people of the time to partake of the meal before the fast, and again at sunset when the hunger of the populace may be appeased.

Almsgiving.

Moharram, the first month in the year, is the time for special offerings. It is the rent day in town, and a considerable sum of money is known to be in existence. Ramadan may be forgotten by the indigent but their memories are quickened by Moharram. Crowds of beggars throng the city streets and wait at the rich man's gate for broken meat. The poor are always found in Jerusalem; beggars by the wayside appeal in piteous tones; the blind are marched from door to door; mendicants in rags, lepers with scars, "holy men" from the country, are ever holding out their hands; even children lisp "backsheesh". Peasants supported by the land and the offerings that spring from the customs of the country in which they live, have no connection with the pauperism of the town.

The Hadj.

The Hadj is a term used to designate the individual pilgrim; it represents the whole of the caravan of pilgrims that goes to Mecca; and it is the title of the pilgrimage itself. All Mohammedans are strictly enjoined to visit Mecca once in their lifetime. The undertaking is hazardous, but the honour derived from it is great; and the fortunate pilgrim who returns from the great Mohammedan shrine will have a title that is coveted even by the rich and great. Every man, having completed the journey with its accompanying prayers and sacrifice, is ever afterwards known by the honoured title of Hadj.

About two hundred pilgrims annually leave the Holy City for Mecca and more than a fourth of them are lost on the way. There are two routes, by sea from Jaffa to Jeddah and thence by land, or overland with the caravan from Damascus. The cost exceeds £100, a sum altogether beyond the reach of a poor Fellah even if he is disposed to undertake the journey.

While a man is absent from home the doorway of his house is painted in bright colours, with various devices supposed to represent the dangers of the road, and the forests and wild beasts encountered by the way. In these allegorical pictures the lions are always chained to trees as illustrations of the control of Mohammed, who protects the pilgrims, or carries them immediately to paradise.

The return of the successful pilgrim is hailed with joy by his relations and friends, who listen to the recital of his adventures and hairbreadth escapes with an avidity that excites his imagination and encourages him

to repeat his story with wonderful additions whenever a friend or neighbour can be induced to listen to the tale. He soon assumes the dignity of his title, and the pride of possession is evident in all the members of his family.

Inquiries are eagerly made about absent friends. Alas! some never come home. The privations of the journey, and the dread scourge of the cholera carry off numbers of pilgrims, and the patient watchers in distant homes grow weary of waiting for the husband or brother that will never return.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEASANTS OR FELLAHEEN.

THE people of Palestine fall very naturally into three distinct classes. They will admit of a more detailed analysis, but as one of these divisions is represented by the peasants, it is altogether unnecessary in the scope of this little work to more than mention the others.

1. Medanyeh—townspeople.
2. Fellaheen—peasants, or country people.
3. Bedawin—nomads who dwell in tents.

A very slight acquaintance with the inhabitants of the Holy Land will enable even the casual observer to distinguish between the residents of a town and the occupants of the surrounding neighbourhood. Costumes alone will serve as a guide when there seems to be no other means of identification. There is not, however, that difference in the dress or appearance of some of the Bedawin that visit Jerusalem to direct the traveller in making a reliable distinction between the farmer who works on the land, and the horseman who rides to the foray, as peasants who live near the country of the Bedawin adopt a similar headdress and cloak; and many tent-dwellers on the west of the Jordan have degenerated according to the notions of their more aristocratic brethren beyond the river, for they now till the soil.

But many marks of difference will soon be apparent

when a more accurate knowledge has been obtained of their dress.

This difference of costume might not be so readily understood in England, where dress is meaningless, and it is almost impossible to distinguish one person from another by his outward appearance, as social position is not determined by clothes, and garments are not always a guide to a man's occupation. No one is easily recognised as the member of a particular church or sect by his dress.

In Palestine every man is known by his clothing, his race and creed, the position he occupies, and the part of the country to which he belongs. "Ye know the man" (2 Kings ix. 11.) The infinite variety of costumes that may be found in a street of Jerusalem is full of information of the people who wear them. Those who wear "soft raiment" are the wealthy, the aristocrats (St. Luke vii. 25); the toilers dress in coarse mantles similar to that worn by John the Baptist. There is never a change of fashion in Palestine, and this is no doubt comforting to the husbands of the land who have wives and daughters. Coats (mantles, *i.e.*, Abyah) woven in Galilee at the present day are often without a seam, and differ considerably from the same garments of Southern manufacture, and we know our Saviour, who had a coat without a seam, came from the North. "Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (St. John xix. 23). He was recognised by the woman of Samaria while resting at Jacob's well as a Jew by His dress. Ruth the Moabitess was doubtless so called because she retained the costume of the country from whence she came. The costumes of the people teach many lessons. They resemble minutely the gar-

ments of the inhabitants of the country in the time of Christ, and the prophets and kings before He came to dwell on earth. All are alike in being loose and roomy. Even if most of them were not made at home the wearer would not have to go to a tailor to be measured for a new coat. The Abyahs, outer garments, are all of the same size for men, and the purchaser looks at the quality and price and not at the size. One man's dress will therefore fit his neighbour equally well and that is why articles of clothing were and are easily adapted for presents (see Gen. xlv. 22; Jud. xiv. 12-20; 2 Kings v. 20-27). Then all are fastened with a girdle, and the loins are bound at the same time. No hooks and eyes or buttons are required, the girdle is enough.

In the description of the "armour of God" (Eph. vi. 13-15) the girdle is of the utmost importance. While it may not be easy to determine with accuracy the resemblance between the parts of the armour specified in this description, and the things with which they are compared, we know that the girdle furnishes a support for the body and keeps the parts of the armour in their proper place, and believe the "girdle of truth" is necessary to give consistency and stability to the character and conduct of a man.

The girdle is even more useful. It forms a receptacle for all manner of things required by the owner and often contains his money. The scribe carries the inkhorn in his girdle. The sword of the warrior is attached to it. And if the significance of the connection of these articles with the girdle of truth is rightly estimated, the sincerity of the wearer will be assured.

The less manual labour a man has to perform and the more material he requires for his costume—"Scribes

which love to go about in long clothing" (St. Mark xii. 38). The long flowing robes of the indolent are a strange contrast to the lightly girded labourer. But all men with loose garments are not inactive. The Bedawin have an inordinate amount of material in their dress; at the first glance no one would think their arms could be used for fighting, as the sleeves of their inner garment run to a point more than a yard long. When preparing for a battle the two ends are tied into a knot, and thrown over the head out of the way. The right arm is then bare and free, and in this custom we have a practical illustration of the passage in Isaiah lii. 10, "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm," showing that God was prepared to take action on behalf of His people. "The strong arm of the Lord" is another text referring to the same habit. The long ends of the sleeves are used as pockets. Any article of value in the possession of the wearer is placed near the end, and secured by a knot. Peasant women from the villages have also sleeves which may be used in the same way, in which they fasten the little things they have purchased in the shops of the city.

All the men living in the country, both Bedawin and Fellaheen, wear two garments. A large white shirt, the "inner garment," and the mantle or coat, very much like a huge sack slit down the front, with a hole at each side for the arms—the "outer garment".

The Coat of Many Colours.

A chief being a man of importance will wear an additional coat of colours, similar to the Kombaz worn by the townsman. It is a mark of distinction which is some-

times conferred on his sons. If a particular son is the recipient of this favour, it is not merely a sign of parental affection but of a preference which indicates the intention of the father to promote him to a higher position. While the eldest son may naturally expect to succeed his father as the chief of his tribe, a younger son can by the father's will occupy the place of honour, if he is regarded as the most capable head.

Subsequent events proved that the Patriarch Jacob's estimate of his sons was correct. The one whom he distinguished by a "coat of many colours" was most worthy of his esteem. Unless the merit of the adopted heir is conspicuous, and he is sufficiently powerful to maintain his position of authority, his succession will be disputed, and in some cases the tribe is thus broken up into factions, each governed by the son of the old chief who can raise a company of adherents. This was notably the case in the tribe of the Beni Sakr. Before the old chief Satm died, he relegated his authority to a younger son. The jealousy that had been provoked by the appointment burst into open rebellion on the death of the ruler. Disappointed and angry brethren do not always wait for the decease of their father. The obstacle to their preferment and the object of their hatred is removed in an unlawful way when a suitable opportunity occurs. This was the method adopted by the sons of Jacob (Gen. xxxvii. 27).

The coat of many colours as a token of esteem and a mark of honour is in this sense related to the "wedding garment" (see p 123).

Their significance cannot be realised without some reference to the customs of the East.

The women have like the men two body garments,

similar in shape but not in colour. Amongst the peasant population there seems to have been no advance in mode of dress. No one has had a mind to devise another pattern. The garments of the women in a village or camp are distinguished from those of the men by colour alone. Ignorance of this custom has led many artists into errors that approach the ludicrous in the mind of an Eastern man, and baffle all the attempts of Western people to understand the meaning attached to the observance of local usage.

A woman's dress in the South Country is always blue or blue with coloured insertions, the man's shirt is white; her mantle is striped red and black, her husband's brown and white. The prevaling colour in the gown of a woman of Samaria is white, the corresponding article worn by the man is blue. The man will wear a turban or kerchief (Kuffyieh), his wife a veil. Here again the peasant women are unlike their sisters of the town; the latter hide their face with a thin gauze veil, whereas the Fellahah like the Bedawyeh has one of substantial size, two yards long and one yard wide, made of strong coarse towelling. In such a veil Ruth the Moabitess could easily carry six measures of barley. "Bring the veil thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley" (Ruth iii. 15).

In addition to the little veil that covers her face a townswoman is enveloped in a large white sheet that hides her costume when she walks in the street. Her ghostly appearance is by no means attractive, but she is effectually disguised. Unless there is some private mark of recognition known to the husband he cannot tell which is the partner of his joys and sorrows, but she can see him through the veil that hides her features.

The absence of any desire to appear to advantage in the street is not an indication of a woman's indifference to fine clothes, but rather an illustration of her unselfish devotion to her lord and master. Her gayest attire, the choicest articles in her wardrobe, are reserved for his eyes alone. She may be unmindful of her appearance in the street, but she is particularly anxious to display her attractions at home. The men of Jerusalem have appreciated the efforts of their wives to please. When the shops close and the work of the day is over they seek their homes and spend their evenings in the bosom of their families. At night the streets are deserted, and no place of amusement tempts the men of the city to forsake their wives, because the irresistible charm of the women at home is too powerful to encourage any enterprising entertainer to establish a counter-attraction elsewhere.

The Fellaheen are the only representatives of the aboriginal inhabitants in Western Palestine, and it is chiefly in their manners and customs that we must expect to find the Bible mirrored in the people. Their existence is in itself a confirmation of Holy Writ, and a corroboration of the truth of the word of God. Yet while we may consider that God has wonderfully preserved the country and its inhabitants to be witnesses for the truth of His word to the present generation, we should exercise our judgment in sifting the evidence furnished by the people. In a detailed account of the modern peasant and his home there will be many phases of life that have grown into his ideas which cannot be found in the Bible, but at the same time amongst the chaff we shall be able to discover the grains that will lead us into Biblical life and thought.

The Fellaheen as they may now be seen away from the track of the tourist and pilgrim, out of the sight of Europeans, where they have not developed the sense of inquiry into the ways of the outer world, offer a field for investigation that is almost unbroken, save by a few whose researches have been confined to a comparatively small circle of earnest workers in this department of exploration.

The Fellah says:—

The Townsman is the Sultan of the world.

The Peasant is the donkey of the world.

The Bedawy is the dog of the world.

The Bedawy has another version:—

The Townsman is the table of the world, the provider.

The Peasant is the donkey of the world, the drudge.

The Bedawy is the Sultan of the world, the ruler.

When the Fellah is satisfied with his lowly condition we may naturally assume he has never known a better one. He is never perturbed by the contemptuous remarks of the men in the town about his humble position and inferior rank; and if he has been found guilty of neglect to perform some office or do some work, he blandly answers, "I am only a poor Fellah". No ambitious schemes agitate his mind. He is content with the station of life in which he was born, and thinks there is nothing in the world as pleasant as the vine-clad hills that surround his home.

Although it is sometimes uncomfortable owing to the exactions of Government officials he submits with the characteristic prudence of men who recognize the futility of resistance.

The flood of immigrant Jews has excited the curiosity of the men amongst whom they have settled. The

advent of the missionary has created a desire for information, and many have eagerly sought instruction. Some who have been brought into contact with the elevating agencies provided for their children have sometimes strangely misunderstood the purport of their work. On one occasion a Fellah who had taken his son to school was asked by the schoolmaster what he expected would happen when he had been trained. He replied: "I should like him to be a gentleman and marry an English lady".

The peasant who has yet had no connection with Europeans is dull and slow, apparently incapable of understanding anything outside the life of his village. He is stolidly indifferent towards any movement that might interfere with his old-fashioned ideas and conservative principles. In some things he is as simple as a child.

The great city, El Kuds esh Shereef, Jerusalem, to which he occasionally carries the produce of his garden or field, is the object of his highest admiration. It is the world beyond his home, and contains all that the heart of man can desire or his imagination portray.

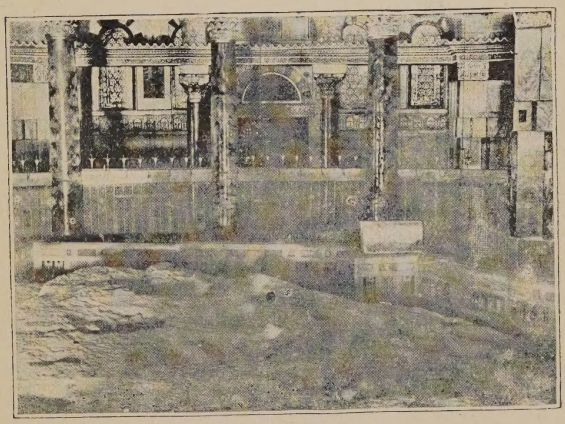
It is connected by a feeling of veneration, which he fails to understand, with the mysterious God that rules the world. It has within its walls the great praying place of all people which he believes owes its existence to the angels who worshipped there thousands of years before the creation of Adam.

All important events and places of interest are associated in the mind of the peasant with some familiar object. The centre of attraction under the great dome, the Sakhrah, is not remarkable to him for its historical associations or the beauty of its shrine, but on account

of a Moslem legend which has grown with his years. He has heard the story from his infancy, and believes it is true. According to tradition the "Rock" was a threshing-floor owned by two brothers (see 2 Sam. xxiv. 24). When the division of corn had been made the brethren slept in turn with the produce of their fields. While the elder watched he reasoned thus: "After such a plentiful harvest I am indeed rich, having not only wife and children but more than enough of corn to supply their needs, whereas my poor brother has neither wife nor child to cheer his loneliness. I must make it up for him in some other way. At least I can give him a bigger share of corn." He then removed a quantity from his own heap to that of his sleeping brother. When the younger awoke soon after and looked at his corn, he said to himself: "What shall I do with all this wheat? I have no one to help me to eat it, and there is more than sufficient for me. My brother has a wife and family and ought therefore to have the larger share, but if I suggested it he would refuse. I will give him some of mine now." In the morning both were surprised to see their corn as they had left it the night before. And as they were gazing in surprise at their equal shares a prophet appeared who told them what had passed in the night, and that God, who was aware of their kindly brotherly feeling, had decided to make their threshing-floor the place of prayer for all the world.

But the legend does not remove the feeling of awe inspired by the guardians of the place, nor lessen his wonder at its magnificence. He is afraid to venture alone in the sanctuary; he is too clumsy to walk over the hallowed stones that lead to the shrine; the awful sanctity of the place appalls him; but once a year in a

A CITY GATE.



THE SACRED ROCK—THE SAKHRAH.

crowd, with faltering steps, he approaches the object of adoration, then quickly withdraws to the streets of the city lest by some mischance he should fail in the performance of his duty and be punished for his temerity.

Apart from the feeling of reverence, the Holy City has always seemed great and beautiful to him, with its cool bazaars teeming with the delights of Esh Sham (Damascus) and the cities of the East.

As a boy when he followed the donkeys to the market, he remembers how he gazed in astonishment at the wonderful things that hung in the shops or lay on the benches so close to his itching fingers. He would have liked to help himself, but for fear of the man behind them with a Kurbaj (whip).

He drank in the scene with open mouth and in the crowd was lost. His heart went thump, thump, when he first felt the shock of being alone in the great city, mingling with a dense throng of people, none of whom he knew. Hither and thither he ran, scarcely considering a moment whether the way he turned led to the city gate or not. The buzz of voices in the narrow crowded streets seemed to turn his beating heart into a lump of lead. He began to cry, and when the city boys saw him in distress they laughed and jeered, then one struck him and that made his fright more awful, and in his terror he ran through the tangled mass of men and animals, scattering the articles lying in the streets for sale, until at length the streets seemed wider and brighter and a stream of people flowing in one direction led the way to the gate. The tears that in their course had made such furrows in the outside polish of his dirty face dried up, and his eyes wreathed in smiles beheld the donkeys of his village patiently

waiting to start for home. They pleased him more than all the visions of splendour in the shops of the market-place.

Next morning as he lazily rolled in the dust of the hillocks near his father's door, he thought of the fearful time on the previous day when all hope of seeing that door again had fled. Kicking up his heels in the ecstasy of his joy he believed that after all there was no place better than that little mound, on which he could stretch his legs in safety.

Year after year he grew like a young tree firmly rooted to his native soil, and beyond a fleeting look at the great city with its domes and minarets he saw nothing, and cared for nothing, more than to live in the place where his forefathers had lived and died and were buried.

Few can conceive the extent of the affection a Fellah bears for his home and country, the country around his dwelling, for he has no national pride. There is no part of this great love lavished on a Fatherland. He belongs to a clan, governed by a Sheikh, which forms no part of a united nation.

The members of these clans have a common language. They possess a common religion, their manners and customs are all the same, but of national unity there is none. They do not even know what it means, nor can they understand the feeling of patriotism that links people together into a brotherhood that co-operates for the well-being of the mother country. Every district lives in and for itself alone, waging its own petty wars, managing its own affairs, settling its own disputes, with but occasional recourse to the centre of government of the power that rules the land as a whole.

The people of the various districts differ considerably in character and speech, resembling each other only so far as to indicate their descent from one common stock; appearing only as the fragments of a nation broken up at some remote period. Sometimes they combine for mutual protection or personal benefit. Seldom do they ever show any desire to extend the limits of their territory. Each village has been in the possession of its land from time immemorial, and no necessity for stepping over its boundaries ever seems to arise without the aggression being forcibly resisted at the expense of blood. Every man clings tenaciously to his freehold, and the village to its common land. The great sorrow of a Fellah's life is the conscription. It is the channel through which he makes the acquaintance of distant scenes, and learns something of the world. When the command is given by the recruiting officer to prepare for marching to the nearest depôt, the peasant shows his aversion to army service by a prompt disappearance. The conscripts have to be collected. They are then fastened together with a long rope and marched into the city. As soon as the recruit stage is passed they are drafted into regiments that garrison the towns of strange provinces, in remote parts of the empire, to prevent desertion.

Townspeople have a poor idea of the intelligence of the peasant. They think it is no higher than the beast on which he often rides, and tell the following story as an illustration:—

"One day a Fellah left the gate of the city with five donkeys. He counted them as they went out before him, then jumped on the back of the last and drove the rest in front of him down to the valley below. When

they began to ascend the opposite hill the thought suddenly occurred to him that there were only four. He looked round on all sides but no other could he see, so he drove them all back to look for the one he believed had been left behind. On reaching the gate he dismounted, then counted them over again, one by one, when lo! there were five. Happy in the possession of all his beasts he mounted the hindmost and rode off. When he approached the place where he first discovered his loss, he was reminded to count again, when to his dismay the result was the same. "By the life of my head," said he, "I must return for that which is left!" Back again at the city gate he saw his five animals in a line, and was heard to mutter, "Well, if I have four animals when I ride, and five when I walk, by the life of my beard, I will go on foot!"

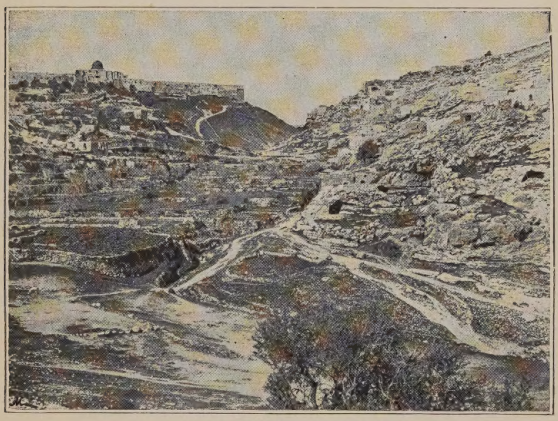
A friend of mine encountered a shepherd on the hills one day, and wishing to purchase six cups of milk for some boys, offered four small coins, and then five. "No," said the keeper of sheep, "I will sell you at the rate of two cups for one coin," and persisted in his endeavour to make a bargain.

As a rule the Fellaheen are capable of transacting any business with numbers up to a hundred, but beyond that figure any expression of numeration means many, and is indefinite.

A Village—The Home of the Peasant.

In matters relating to his house and home the peasant is very shrewd. The position of a village shows that the inhabitants are capable of estimating the value of a right choice of a site for their dwellings. They are

A VILLAGE IN GILEAD—AJLUN.



THE KEDRON VALLEY—VILLAGE OF SILOAM ON THE RIGHT.

built at the top or side of a hill, and seem at the first glance in the sunlight of a bright summer day to be a part of its rocky side. When the rain has washed the white dust from their walls, or when surrounded by trees and gardens, they are more distinct, and often picturesque. The position on or near the summit of a hill commands a view of the surrounding country and renders a village in the ordinary warfare of the Fellaheen well-nigh impregnable. To add to this desirable situation the houses are built like little forts and close together. The watchman standing on the highest roof after giving the alarm of impending danger might easily jump from one to another and thus escape. "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house" (Matt. xxiv. 17).

When storm clouds burst and the rain rushes in torrents over the rocks on the hillsides, and innumerable little streams tumble precipitately down the mountains the village homes are free from damp walls or standing pools. To prevent the house from following the course of the rain it is firmly built on the rock with strong thick walls. "I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (St. Matt. vii. 24).

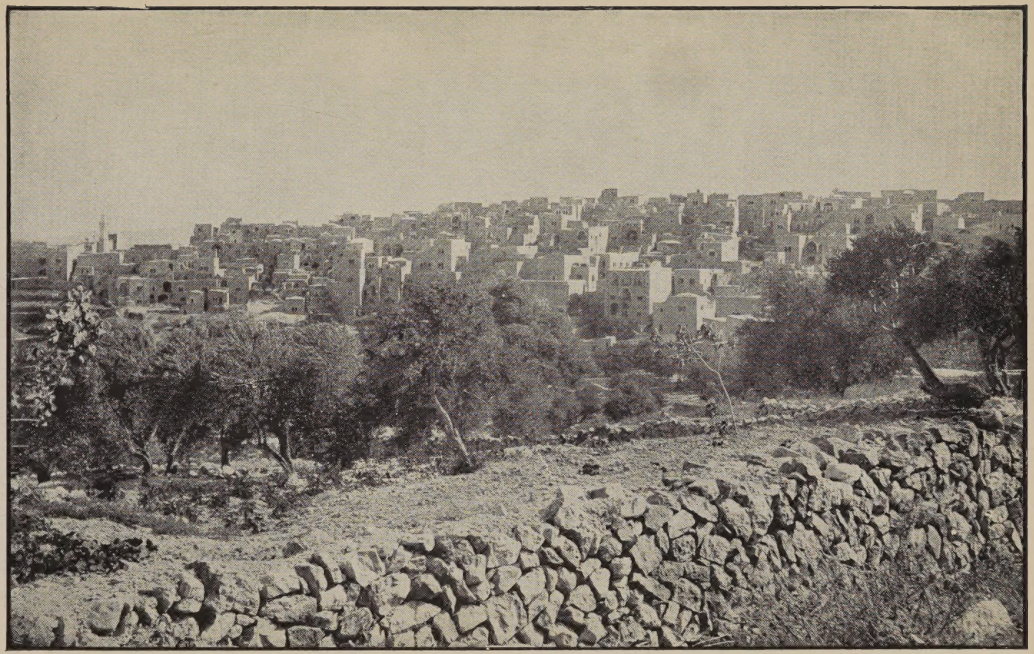
A good foundation follows a wise choice in the building operations of the peasant. In appearance the houses are neither remarkable for style nor architectural skill. They are all erected on the same plan emanating from a mind limited in ideas, devoid even of the capacity of making a straight line, and utterly ignorant of the most elementary details of construction.

Four thick walls, composed of rough-hewn stones, with a hole for the door, and perhaps another to represent a window, as coarse and rugged within as on the outside, but strong and durable, are all that a peasant requires for a house. In the hill country where timber is procurable, branches of trees are placed across the top of the walls, a layer of earth is then added to complete the structure, and the children of the village press it down with their little feet to make it flat.

On the maritime plain along the coast, where there is little stone and few trees, the houses of the poor are ill fitted to withstand the tempests of rain that at times deluge the land. Happily storms are less frequent there than on the hills, or it would be necessary to resort to the mountains at a great expense to provide materials for more substantial habitations. When the winter is very severe and the rain falls in ceaseless torrents for days, many of the houses that are made of mud and raised on sand are swept away. The roofs saturated with the wet dry quickly and often crack in the heat of the sun. The fissure then made gradually widens until the walls collapse. "If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (St. Mark iii. 25).

A wise choice and a right foundation are the essential features of a good dwelling. Appearances are deceptive; the most pleasing or the most imposing will fall, if the site is not wisely chosen and the best foundation laid (1 Cor. iii. 10-13; Isa. xxviii. 16).

In large villages and small towns where abundance of good building material lies close at hand, and prosperity has increased the resources of the inhabitants, the houses are larger. A yard with a high wall forms part of the homestead and if the Sheikh (chief) is a



BETHLEHEM.

man of importance in the district his house may possibly consist of two storeys. The roof will be composed of solid stone instead of the rude handiwork of his dependant. The walls rising slightly above it form the battlements of his dwelling. "When thou buildest a new house, thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof" (Deut. xxii. 8).

But he is keenly alive to the exactions of the Government, and while he combines safety and security with the position he occupies, remembering the feelings of unscrupulous superiors, he is satisfied with a substantial building without any regard for the attractiveness of its appearance (Proverbs xvii. 19; 2 Kings xxv. 9; Micah ii. 2; Amos iii. 15). The battlements are provided for the safety of the occupants. The housetop is the favourite resort for the man of prayer (Acts x. 9), the place for an evening stroll (2 Sam. xi. 2), the spot where privacy will not be interrupted by the familiar attentions of the residents of the village (1 Sam. ix. 25), and without the battlement would be dangerous to life and limb.

In the centre of the rock foundation a well is often made. The roof then though apparently flat gradually slopes in one direction towards a channel that communicates with the well beneath. The inclination of the roof is almost imperceptible, and in no way interferes with the pleasure of the inmates of the dwelling, but its shape is permanently fixed for receiving the rain which flows towards the channel and down to the well. The owner of the house having a well inside is in the fortunate position of the man of independent means. While his friends and neighbours are compelled to go to the well outside the village, he is sup-

plied from within. Towards the close of the dry season when the first rain appears it is thoroughly cleansed of any of the impurities that might have been caused by the carelessness of the servants that used the water.

Where there is a scarcity of supply through insufficient accommodation, and the people are suffering from thirst, the man with the well is often able to supply their needs from the abundant store in his possession. There is always enough for the wants of himself and family.

Living Water, the Gift of God.

The position of the well and the condition of the roof afford us an opportunity of more clearly understanding our Lord's offer to the woman of Samaria of the water of life (St. John iv. 14, 15).

In the East certain wells have a reputation from association or connection with some person or event that exaggerates their importance. The water in Jacob's well was not better than the water in the wells of Sychar but its reputation was greater.

It attracted the woman of Samaria who was dependent on the water of the neighbourhood having no well of her own.

One of the phases of ancient and modern life is its restlessness. The fever of dissatisfaction creates a thirst for something outside itself. Samson was not satisfied with the quietude of the camp of Dan. The worldly delights of Gaza attracted his attention. He thirsted for the pleasures of the city. And when once he drank he thirsted again.

The prodigal in his father's home longed for a sight of the great world beyond and turned his back on the

realities of life to feed on its husks. The world is a glittering sham; it looks full and satisfying; it glows with attractions; but it is only a husk after all.

For a moment the man's thirst is quenched in the pleasures of life. Intoxicating excitement intensifies his feelings and inflames his senses. But the fascination dies and leaves him limp and powerless and he thirsts again. The supreme mistake is in misunderstanding the source of life. The worldling looks outside for inspiration. He seeks through the region of sense what can only be found in the realm of the spirit. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). Life comes from within and not without; it is the gift of God. Man is not a creator but a recipient. "A good man shall be satisfied from himself" (Prov. xiv. 14).

Christ offered to make man independent and free. As the rain falls on the just and the unjust, it drops on every house whether it is ready or unprepared to receive it. If the house is built in the right way it catches the rain and the supply is sufficient. If the attitude of man is Godward he will receive the spirit of God. The eager haste will be stayed, the thirst quenched, the will of man subdued, by the spirit of God entering into the soul. Spiritual force is the opposite of passion, of labour, and of effort. It gives abiding satisfaction and makes a man independent of outward circumstances. The supply of grace is never-failing when the attitude of man is heavenward. Communication with God is established, and the life of God in the soul of man is everlasting.

A House and Home.

Though the houses of the Fellaheen differ considerably in size and comfort from the mansions of the cities of the East, one principle seems to establish a likeness in all internal arrangements. A platform called the "Lewan" is raised above the floor of every dwelling. It is seen in the inn and the rich man's palace.

In a cottage it is reserved for the use of the family while the lower portion of the room is occupied by the poultry and sometimes even the sheep and goats. A courtyard in a city house corresponds with the floor of the cottage. At one end of it is the "Lewan," and at the other the porter's lodge or street door. When a visitor has obtained admission he is received on the "Lewan" where the meals are served. It may be a portion of the only room, or of one of the apartments of a large house.

If the accommodation is limited and the reception-room is also used as the dining-room and the bedroom, some pretension towards refinement is visible in the management of the household.

There is no sign of any inconvenience that might be caused by the requirements of a family. Very little furniture is necessary even for a home in the city. The beds, "behaffs," resemble the eiderdown quilts of the West. Being equally light and easily carried, they are rolled up in the morning and placed in a recess of the wall (St. John v. 8). The cupboards in which they are kept during the day are the bedchambers referred to in 2 Kings xi. 2. In some houses separate apartments are provided according to the size of the dwelling (2 Kings iv. 33; St. Matt. vi. 6).

Where the village home is small a few mats or perhaps a home-made carpet are spread on the "Lewan" to encourage sleep.

A peasant revels in an outdoor life. He is inured to hardship and scorns the ease of the townsman, wandering about for days without a care or thought for his home if he can benefit by being away. He sleeps with his companions in the fields, by the roadside, or on the housetop, anywhere in summer rather than beneath his own roof. In winter when nothing but discomfort and rheumatism would attend his slumbers he seeks its shelter. His outer garment, "Abyah," is his bed at night and rolled in this covering his sleep is sound and sweet. "If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down:

"For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep" (Exod. xxii. 26, 27).

That which relates to the pledge may have fallen into disuse but the raiment for a covering is still the rule. Pillows are luxuries in which the peasants rarely indulge. Head rests are common and the most accessible article, generally a stone, is used. Jacob took a stone for his pillow (Gen. xxviii. 18).

The rich and idle avail themselves of every opportunity for making life agreeable. Even in the tent of a Bedawin chief I have found pillows covered with silk for guests of rank. In warning the children of Israel against the enervating influence of luxury and ease, Ezekiel xiii. 18-20 refers to pillows: "Wherefore thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against your pillows". "And Michael took an image and laid

it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster" (1. Sam. xix. 13, 16).

Amongst the poor the sleeping-place at night is the reception-room of the day. But amidst the enjoyments of the rich a "divan" or couch is a necessary article of furniture. It may serve the twofold purpose of the single room, as it is a place of rest where men recline, as well as a bed on which they sleep. In Esther vii. 8, "Haman was fallen upon the bed," reference is made to the couch as a resting-place and not a bed.

The implements of husbandry are hung on pegs round the cottage wall. Some very primitive-looking chests made of dried clay are found on the edge of the platform; they are corn-bins (see one baking in the sun in the picture on page 101), and form with a very limited number of earthenware articles the furniture of a peasant's home. A few sacks woven of the same material as the mantles, a wicker basket, and a hand-mill, will complete the list.

The pottery utensils that come from the hands of the native manufacturer are like those of the Amorites and Phœnicians that have been dug out of the earth. The common lamp of burned clay is made from one cake with its sides turned up and shaped like a saucer with a small spout or nozzle. At night it is filled with oil, and a burning wick floating on its surface is the only illumination of the house.

Lamps of all sizes, shapes, and patterns, have been made of the same material and in the same way ever since the Israelites entered the land; wherever there is a difference of design it can be traced to a foreign source. Jewish lamps changed little until Greek and Roman influence altered the models. As long as other

AN EASTERN BED.—ST. JOHN V. 10, 11.

ANCIENT POTTERY.

nations provided cheap domestic utensils for the people they were satisfied. But when they are compelled to rely on their own efforts, for they have neither the means nor the inclination to purchase imported lamps of glass and china, they adopt the old way of working and the same tools. "We are the clay, and Thou our potter, and we are all the work of Thy hand" (Isa. lxiv. 8).

They are not gifted with a creative or artistic faculty, being tillers of the soil, or "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Josh. ix. 27), with ancient ideas, and unable to construct anything beyond the most simple form, and for lamps and domestic utensils, of the most plastic material, clay.

These very elementary features present to us an intelligence that does not far exceed that of the rudest savage. Clay is of such a nature that the art of working it might be easily discovered, and the baking of it in the sun or in an oven is but one step in the development and improvement of the crudest mind, and represents the first effort in the art of manufacture. In this fact we seem to have a significant confirmation of the descent of the Fellaheen from the aborignial inhabitants. Their minds are primitive and belong to a period remote from the present.

Earthenware lamps now found in large quantities in the Holy Land, and still used by the peasants, were and are carried by virgins that go to meet the bridegroom "Ten virgins which took their lamps" (Matt. xxv. 1). "*Τας λαμπαδας*" here are generally understood by Greek scholars to mean torches, but this in no way affects the question. Even now at a city wedding torches are used, but in a village, lamps.

As some lamps hold a very small amount of oil, little jars are used for carrying an additional supply when it might be needed. The foolish virgins had made no provision for a time of waiting and their lamps were going out.

If the Fellah may be said to have a luxury, it is the lamp. When the sun sets the door of his house is closed for the night. Immediately afterwards the lamp is lit. For a man to have no light burning after nightfall is a sign of extreme poverty, and peasants in referring to a poor man will say, "He sleeps without a light". Lamp, light and life in the Bible are synonymous terms. Candle is a word with a similar meaning.

"The light shall be dark in his tabernacle and his candle shall be put out with him" (Job xviii. 6).

"How oft is the candle of the wicked put out" (Job xxi. 17).

"For Thou wilt light my candle" (Ps. xviii. 28).

"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord" (Prov. xx. 27).

"Moreover I will take from them . . . the light of the candle" (Jer. xxv. 10).

"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" (St. Matt. v. 15).

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (St Matt. v. 16; see also 2. Sam. xxi. 17, xxii. 29; 1. Kings xv. 4).

From Genesis to Revelation innumerable expressions are found that reveal to man the life-giving property of light. Our Lord is the Light of the world. And when the Israelites were in Egypt and darkness that could

be felt enveloped their dwellings there was light within. The Fellah's lamp with its feeble gleam shining through the chinks of his door shows to the belated traveller in the darkness there is life inside his home. When a man, cursing his neighbour with a fearful oath, says, "May your lamp be put out," he means the life of his family, and repeats the same words that are applied in Proverbs xiii. 9 to the destruction of the wicked.

Around many early Christian lamps, especially of the fifth century, in very elementary Greek, are found words that illustrate the prevailing ideas of the time. "Light of life" and "the light of life shines forth" are most often seen. On the death of a relative lamps were placed in his tomb to show the Christian's hope and belief in life eternal.

As soon as the dawn appears, before the sun has risen over the hills, the door of the house is opened. The open door is a permanent invitation for any man to enter. The hospitality of which every man is very proud is freely offered. "Behold I have set before thee an open door" (Rev. iii. 8). All day long it stands invitingly wide until the sun sets and the darkness bids all men seek repose.

If a door was shut the people on the outside would think that something was being done within of which they were ashamed. They are fully alive to the fact that "men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (St. John iii. 19).

In the city an open door is also an invitation but it applies only where there is a feast. The seclusion of the harem alters the conditions of life in a town. Doors are shut, and it is by no means easy to obtain admission. If a stranger appears at the door and

knocks, he may hear a voice from within shouting, "Who's there?" and though he would instantly answer he must wait for further inquiries. "What do you want?" "Where do you come from?" are questions usually asked to afford the people inside an opportunity of putting things in order or enabling them to recognise the voice. At last the door is opened and the visitor is ushered into the courtyard, where profuse apologies for the unavoidable delay he has experienced cover him with confusion.

It is very necessary in comparing the words of the Bible with the customs of the land of the Bible for purposes of illustration to have some acquaintance with the distinction between life in a village and the manners of a town. When our Lord said, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (St. Matt. vii. 7), His invitation would mean there would be no waiting and no questions asked if men would come to Him. Again in Rev. iii. 20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with Me," reference is made to the city custom. A further illustration is found in Acts xii. 13, 14.

Sometimes a porter is the custodian. The street door will then open into a vestibule that leads into the courtyard. But in most of the city dwellings of the rich, when the street door is open the courtyard is exposed to the gaze of all who pass by. Morning and evening of every day a long line of beggars stand at the gate waiting for the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table. When he gives a supper the door is allowed to remain open to the public who wander round the courtyard expecting a call to the Lewan,

"to go up higher," and partake of the repast. In this way the "woman who was a sinner" entered Simon the Pharisee's house. She passed through the open door having seen Jesus go in to the supper. It required courage for a woman in her position to walk in the courtyard. But the public act of penitence was braver still. As our Lord reclined on the platform raised above the courtyard, with His feet projecting outward, she was able to wash them with her tears. Her act of devotion, the manifestation of her love in such a place is a subject for meditation.

There is no privacy in a village: everybody walks everywhere, and enters, not only into any house, but joins in the conversation, and seeks information of the business carried on by other people, until the day's work is over and weariness calls them home. Soon after six o'clock in winter, and eight o'clock in summer, the day is done and work and play cease until the morrow.

If a stranger appears the event is communicated with amazing rapidity to every one in the village. Unusual interest is stirred by the advent of a doctor willing to heal the sick, or a traveller capable of imparting information of the world beyond the district in which they live. The "crowds" and "multitudes" that followed Jesus of Nazareth obeyed the natural inclination of the people. And when He was in the country it is easy to understand why He led His disciples apart (St. Luke ix. 10), and why He went into a desert place for a season of quiet thought and prayer (St. Luke vi. 12).

Twice a day the Fellah eats, and as many times more as the opportunity offers. He is unlike an Englishman not only in his manner of taking food, but in his

capacity for providing a space for as much as is set before him. When there is nothing left the meal is finished. He takes no thought of the morrow, his anxiety for the present occupies all his attention regarding food.

Woman's first duty in the morning is to take a supply of grain from the corn-bin and call a neighbour or friend to assist her in grinding it at the mill. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill" (St. Matt. xxiv. 41). Two women are always required for the work on account of the weight of the stone, a woman alone would be helpless. The corn is put into a hole at the top and gradually falls between the stones as the upper revolves on the lower and is crushed into coarse flour.

The sound of the mill and the open door are signs of life and prosperity. "And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low," (Eccl. xii. 4) would mean desolation and sorrow, want and disaster.

Grinding is always the work of the women, even slaves regard it as unfit for man (Exod. xi. 5). Jeremiah includes in the petitions of his prayer to God (Lam. v. 13) the lamentable fact, "They took young men to grind". And Samson's servitude would become intolerable when the Philistines made him "grind corn in the prison-house" (Jud. xvi. 21). It was the greatest indignity that could be put upon the hero of Dan.

In God's judgment upon Babylon Isaiah prophesies the downfall of the wealthy and noble in these words: "There is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the grindstones and grind meal" (Isa. xlvii. 1, 2).

MAKING BUTTER.

GRINDING AT THE MILL.

The "mill" is the most necessary and useful article of the home, and may not be received in pledge.

In Deuteronomy xxiv. 6, God shows His providential care of the details of the life of man in a prohibition that enables the thriftless and the indigent to prepare for daily bread. "No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge."

Very little time is occupied in baking as there is not much kneading to be done, the dough being spread in a thin layer, which when placed on the oven or hot ashes is soon ready for eating. When leavened bread is made a small quantity of sour dough is used—This is the leaven thatl eaveneth the whole (1 Cor. v. 6)—and a piece of dough is always kept on one side for this purpose, though rarely used, as unleavened bread is generally consumed (1 Sam. xxviii. 24; Exod. xii. 39). The oven is not in the house, it has a building of its own, the joint property of several families whose duty is to keep it always hot, and being an article of baked clay (see one with two lids baking in the sun on p. 101), it retains the heat for a considerable length of time when filled with fuel and covered with hot ashes. "Ten women shall bake your bread in one oven" (Lev. xxvi. 26). The fuel is the rough grass, leaves, twigs, and dung, that the children collect round the village, and is put into the oven. "The grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven" (Mal. iv. 1; St. Matt. vi. 30).

While the mother bakes the bread the daughters are sent to the well for water, and the breakfast is then ready. Where there are rules in a household, the morning meal is prepared by the wife in the early part

of the day, but if the attention of the male portion of the family is required outside, a few pieces of bread are carried and eaten on the way to work. Towards evening the principal and often the only real meal is provided, and consists of bread with a relish, either made of vegetables, tomatoes or onions, or in the shape of home-made cheese or olives. Meat is seldom eaten unless an animal is killed to prevent its dying a natural death. Fruit is consumed at all times where plentiful, and cucumbers take the place of apples to the boys of Palestine. A father in the city has been known to purchase half a dozen as a bribe to induce his son to go to school.

The food when prepared is carried on a tray to the men, and placed on the "Lewan". Neither tables nor chairs are used in a cottage. The men sit on their heels around the tray, without knives or forks, dipping their fingers in the various dishes with pieces of bread in which the liquid part of the food is carried to the mouth. A woman may eat at the same time as her husband if there is no visitor, but certainly not in presence of a stranger; the pathetic figure stands aloof, watching intently the needs of those she willingly serves.

In well-conducted houses no one takes his place at the trencher without first washing his hands; a boy or servant will pour water on them, unless the host wishing to honour a guest takes that humble duty himself (St. John xiii. 5, 6, 10).

Even the feet are washed if the visitor is important, or wears sandals. "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for My feet" (St. Luke vii. 44). We find Christ mildly rebuking Simon the Pharisee for

WASHING HANDS.

his lack of service compared with the reverential act of the woman "who was a sinner".

Evidently our Lord had been treated with indifference, unbecoming a host who prided himself on being used to the amenities of social life.

The "Washing of the Feet" is an institution of the Greek Church and numbered amongst the spectacular plays associated with their Easter Festival in Jerusalem.

It reminds us of the significance of the Lord's washing the feet of His disciples. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet" (St. John xiii. 5, 8, 10). The daily cleansing of the earth's dust from the walk of life, the removal of the stains of sin that have been contracted in our intercourse with the world, is necessary for every true believer who has been wholly washed in the Blood of Christ.

We see in St Mark vii. 4—"Except they wash they eat not"—how common was the custom of washing before meals. The outward cleansing is carried to excess in the present day. If a Moslem peasant has washed his hands for prayer, he will not touch the hand of a woman, not even his mother, lest he be defiled and his prayer of no avail.

I once watched a soldier of the garrison in Jerusalem greet a female relation from the country after he had cleansed his hands for his midday devotions. He carried a cloak and placed it between his own hand and that of the woman. Cleanliness in the Moslem's formulæ is next to godliness. If he performs his ablutions regularly he is enveloped in an odour of sanctity that enables him to pursue his vocation with a reputation that merits esteem.

The peasants before partaking of a meal say—"Bismillah"—"In the name of God," and conclude with thanks.

If there are pillows or cushions in a house they are brought for the honoured guest so that he may recline more comfortably, and every mark of respect is shown to him. The servant stands ready to give him water and every motion is eagerly watched. But this would be noticed more plainly in the house of a sheikh.

There the servant never leaves his master's presence except to do his bidding. His eyes are fixed on his features, watching to see if he can anticipate his wishes; and so thoroughly does he learn to know him that one scarcely hears a command. Every glance is recognised and its meaning interpreted. "I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Ps. xxxii. 8). "Behold as the eyes of the servants look unto the hand of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us" (Ps. cxxiii. 2).

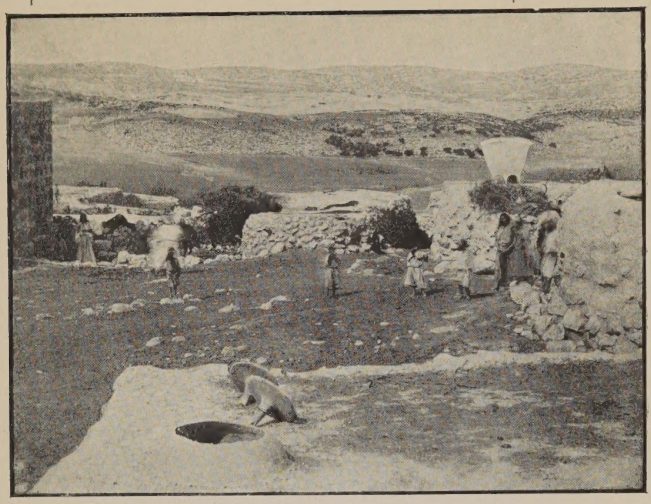
During the progress of the meal we might almost imagine our Lord and His disciples sitting at meat, and the dipping of the sop, for this is a common practice and one that cannot well be understood by those only acquainted with Western habits. The Eastern manner of taking food is comfortable and affectionate, and no one feels disposed to dine alone.

When the meal is over the servant girded with a towel offers his services to every guest. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet" (St. John xiii. 4, 5).

The humblest office and the most lowly position

The Guest Chamber.

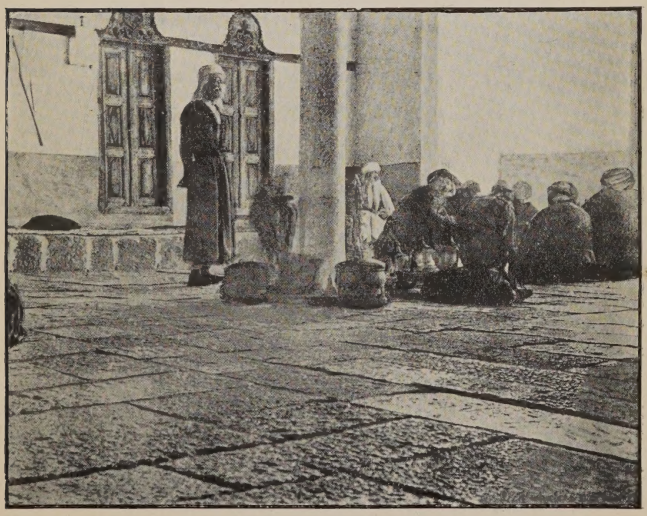
The Corn Bin.



The Oven.

THE CENTRE OF A VILLAGE.

The Servant. His Lord.



AN EVENING MEAL.

have been ennobled by the Son of Man. Labour and service have been elevated to the highest rank by the gracious condescension of the Son of God.

Truly in every department of human life "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (St. Luke xiv. 11). A new standard of life was established by Jesus Christ. Hitherto all irksome duties had been discharged by servants, and the happiness of man depended on the attention he received from others; whereas it arises from man's own efforts and exertions inspired by the spirit of God for the welfare of his fellowmen. A life of service is the ideal life of man. It has been sanctified and dignified by the example of the Master, who took upon Him the form of a servant. He came to do the Father's will and went about doing good.

In summer the cooking operations are carried on out of doors in the open air, but in cold weather the inside of the house is preferred. There is no fireplace worthy of the name. A little open clay-baked box, or a curious article like a thick jar with holes at the sides, that can be carried about quite easily, is the only stove they use. Dried dung is the fuel, and when it is burned in the house where there is no aperture for the escape of the smoke except the door, it is neither pleasant for the organ of sight nor smell. There is one advantage, however, in having no chimney, the owner is saved the expense of colouring the walls. In a few years' time the surface is a rich dark brown which grows deeper with age until it is quite black. Sticks are sometimes burnt, but not by a poor Fellah. His wife takes them to town and sells them. A rich sheikh can afford to burn wood or charcoal—"a fire of coals" (St. John xviii. 18)—

and a visit to his house alone would furnish a very erroneous impression of the homes of the common people.

There is one building in the village set apart for the use of the stranger—the guest-chamber—medâfe. The wayfarer on asking for the "guest-chamber" is immediately taken to the medâfe where he will be hospitably fed and lodged at the expense of the community. The "corner of the field" (Leviticus xxiii. 22) is the provision still made by the people. It was unnecessary for the disciples to take purse or scrip on their journeys through the villages of the country while the custom to entertain strangers was the heritage of the people. In some places there is more than one guest-chamber, but only when there are rival factions and rival sheikhs. One medâfe in a village is the sign of a peaceful community under one head.

If the village is large and important, the head man or sheikh may be rich, and probably will have a special room for his guests, besides the common yet hospitable medâfe. In small towns like Bethlehem, all rich men have guest-chambers, and it was no doubt to one of these in Jerusalem that our Lord sent his disciples with the message to that unknown believer who sheltered the Christ. "Say ye to the goodman of the house, the Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber?" (St. Mark xiv. 14).

The little things of life, the petty details of social intercourse offer material for thought of boundless interest. Here we get a glimpse of a disciple unknown to fame, who gave up his choicest room wherein the Lord might keep the Feast of the Passover. The story of the "upper room" is pregnant with meaning. While the poorest

of the people had some place in which to celebrate the great deliverance, One who had nowhere to lay His head was received by a man whose name has not been recorded; and yet the affectionate regard he displayed towards the Master has been kept alive. The secret communication between the "goodman" and the "Master" is known to all who have voluntarily accepted Him as Lord. And this knowledge is a recompense and reward above all earthly distinctions. It is not reserved for the rich and great, but may belong to every one who will find a place in his heart for Christ.

Where there is a large population and numerous guest-chambers there is seldom a common medâfe: a large khan or inn will be found instead, where a small charge is made for the accommodation of the traveller who will often sleep beside his beast. Though this is unnecessary, there is sometimes a danger of some one mistaking the animal for his own and taking it away in the dark before the owner is aware of its removal.

A portion of the inn, the "Lewan," is raised about a foot above the surrounding enclosure and protected by a roof. On this platform the weary may seek their repose after a day's journey, providing always their own bed-clothing, "lehaffs," space alone being found by the innkeeper. When every available spot is occupied, and this frequently happens in the pilgrim season, a place for sleeping must be sought elsewhere. Should the inn happen to be on the side of a hill there may be caves hollowed out of the limestone rock that offer extra accommodation, and one of these will be warmer and more comfortable than the open ground within the four walls of a khan. When Joseph and Mary arrived at the inn or khan in Bethlehem, nearly two thousand years

ago, they were glad to find shelter in one of these caves, where the Son of Man came into the world, because there was "no room for them in the inn" (St. Luke ii. 7), that is on the "Lewan;" and a cave in the precincts of the inn was better than the bare and open ground beneath the sky in the most inclement season of the year.

Birth.

The birth of a child is an important event in a village home. When the time is approaching the expectant father leaves his dwelling and waits in the garden or field for a friend who has been left at the door to bring the news. If the infant is a boy, he runs down the hill with the greatest glee, waving his arms, and shouting at the top of his voice, "Bschara, Bschara," *i.e.*, "Good tidings, good tidings". "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you a son is born," is the message he conveys to the parent. The heavenly messenger appeared before the shepherds of Bethlehem with a similar declaration. "Behold I bring you good tidings" (St. Luke ii. 10), announcing the advent of the long-expected Messiah, the birth of the Son of Man. The midnight vigil on Bethlehem's plain was interruped by the most glorious news that man had ever heard. Many noble souls of the Hebrew race longed for the hope of Israel, the coming of the King, and many died without the sight.

The anxiety of the father is soon dispelled. He sees and hears his friend and hurries home to name the child.

The babe is immediately rubbed all over with salt. This is an ancient custom. "Under the similitude of a

wretched infant is shown the natural state of Jerusalem," in Ezekiel xvi. 4: "Thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all".

After the salting the babe is wrapped in swaddling clothes, so tight that it cannot move. "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (St. Luke ii. 12).

After seven days the child is unfastened, washed with fresh oil, rubbed again with salt, then bound up once more in the swaddling clothes. This continues until forty days have elapsed, when it is dressed in the ordinary garments of the Fellaheen.

The father makes a feast for his friends who are expected to bring presents. Every man according to his means will offer a sum of money for the benefit of the boy, and in true Eastern fashion the father, who is also the collector, will appropriate the amount received for his own use. The wise men who came to see Jesus "presented unto Him gifts" (St. Matt. ii. 11). The offering of a sacrifice generally forms part of the proceedings; a lamb is brought by the relations and its flesh given to the poor.

If a girl is born, there are no good tidings. The messenger walks in a disconsolate manner down the hill, and the father knows there is a catastrophe at home. The disappointing intelligence is broken gently to the sorrowing parent by a reference to the time when the innocent cause of his grief will have established a claim on his regard. "Blessed be the bride," are words of hope. But the father refuses to be comforted and usually accompanies his reply, "God bless thee," with an offer of the girl, which is not always an empty compliment. If it meets with approval he answers, "I

accept". A sacrifice is then brought to ratify the betrothal and the waiting for the wedding begins. But if the messenger declines he ignores the offer by politely saying, "God bless thee, abou——".

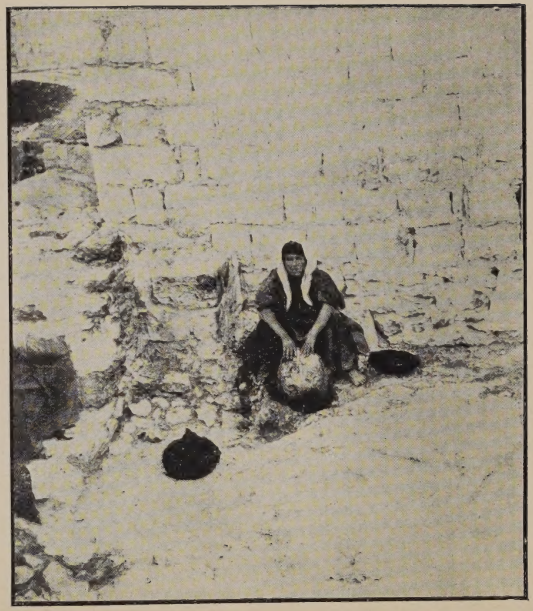
A girl is of no account until she is old enough to be married. The father is then willing to notice her; he takes an interest in her appearance and estimates her value; he considers himself a man of property and is even able to obtain credit from the trader who supplies him with sugar, rice, and coffee, because of his possessions. If he has three daughters he can reckon himself worth from £60 to £120 according to their age and attractions. But in spite of their worth he will not count them in the number of his children when enumerating the members of his family. They are only girls after all.

On the birth of his first-born son he assumes a position of considerable importance, and a new name. He is no longer known by the appellation that has hitherto distinguished him, but by that of his son. In future he will be Abou Abdallah (if the latter is the name of the boy) *i.e.*, the Father of Abdallah.

Children are carried at the breast much longer than in England, boys especially, until they are even three or four years of age, sharing with the next born the benefits of maternal care. The mother believes her sons will be stronger and feeds them in this way until they can walk and talk. "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp" (Isa. xi. 8). "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength" (Ps. viii. 2).

As the mother's time is fully occupied with the work of her house and its surroundings, the little mite is

WOMAN CARRYING CHILD.—ISA, XLIX, 22,



CRUSHING OLIVES,

laid in a corner; slung in a piece of carpet on her back when she carries her basket of eggs to market; and swung in a little hammock on the branch of a tree when her labour is in the field. When the child is able to use its legs, its energetic mother places them astride her shoulder and it is soon able to keep its elevated position without danger. "And thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (Isa. xlix. 22).

A Moslem boy is not circumcised until he is several years old; the age varies from five to twelve.

The children of Christian peasants are baptized. The Fellaheen who belong to the Greek Church, the Church of the country, are in many ways superior to the Mohammedan villagers, and if their Christianity is little more than a profession it has raised them to a higher position of respectability, and the regard for women and their treatment place them in a class apart from those under consideration.

A peasant mother is very fond of her children and though she may have little time to caress them she willingly deprives herself of many necessaries in order that she may promote their physical well-being. Native women make good nurses for European children when care and kindness are required; indulgence too frequently spoils their charge, never cruelty or neglect.

Very little comfort surrounds the upbringing of a young peasant, but there is no lack of maternal affection. The mother will fondle her babe and call him by all kinds of endearing names, "My life!" "My soul!" "My Lord!" "Light of my eye!" etc.

Early in life the little brown piece of humanity becomes acquainted with one of the scourges of the East —the flies. As he lies helpless they attach themselves

to the most exposed parts of his little face, settling comfortably round his mouth and eyes. At first he screams, then perhaps his mother throws her veil over his face, and the pests depart, leaving him nearly suffocated for want of air. But she cannot long protect him, so he yells until he becomes accustomed to the clusters of flies that sit on his face. After awhile little notice is taken of them, and many children may be seen playing amongst the dust of the village without the slightest intention of brushing the insects off.

A peasant is not trained to use soap and water, the salting at his birth is supposed to keep him fresh and clean for the rest of his life, and no boy in the village ever looks as if he had been washed. It is the want of cleanliness that breeds so many diseases, particularly of the eyes, and why so many become blind when quite young.

Children's ailments receive but scant attention. Nature is the healer except when the illness is prolonged, and a bad attack of fever compels the sufferer to remain indoors. A remedy is then necessary, and the patient is bled by scraping the skin with a razor.

If no improvement is visible, branding with a hot iron is the next resource. For inflammation of the gums while teething a red-hot needle is applied to the lower part of the tongue. Wounds are covered with a paste, composed of finely powdered red earth mixed with water.

When these common remedies fail nothing more can be done; branding with a hot iron and the letting of blood are the only means known to the peasants for the alleviation of suffering, and the ultimate cure of a sick person. They consider in any case that the patient is in the hands of God, much more so when no act of their

own can save him, and philosophically resign themselves, hoping, of course, that the hand of God will rest but lightly in affliction, and eventually restore the patient to his wonted health and strength.

After a child has cut its first teeth it is permitted to crawl about the house, armed with a piece of bread, which is very likely the only toy it will ever see.

Perhaps, when it is a little older, and able to run after the donkeys into the town or city, a miniature instrument of music, possibly a drum, will be given to it on a feast day.

Girls never have any dolls; they do not even know how to play. From childhood they seem like little women, and as their clothes are identically the same as those of their mothers, differing only in size, the resemblance leaves nothing but stature wanting. The burdens of life fall quickly upon them; as soon as they are able to run, they are taught to carry the water-jar and bring it full from the well. Before they are as old as an English school-girl they know how to knead the dough, bake and cook, and are acquainted with all the cares of a peasant's house; by the time they are twelve they are ready for marriage.

The life of a woman is full of sadness; from its dawn, when all that is bright and gay should surround it, to the setting of the sun of its existence, few gleams of sunshine flit across the day of a woman's life. She is one of the goods and chattels of her husband's house, bought and paid for like the rest. Her life knows no love but that which she gives to others, to the children she bears, and sometimes to their father. No Sabbath illumines the week for her, one day is much like another; day after day, month after month, the time of

which she takes no account, passes from one year into the next. It records the births of her children and the deaths of her relations, and perhaps the worst of all, the advent of another wife to her husband. Her sprightly step is less firm, the skin of her face begins to wrinkle, and the little red fades into the brown. The arms, that were once so round and strong, can no longer perform their duties, and she wanders aimlessly through the village almost unnoticed, except by those who carelessly glance at her shrunken figure, and wonder how soon "the old one" will be going away. If her sons have been left in the village, and not carried off by the conscription and lost in some petty war in a distant province, her only joy remains. All her life she has denied herself for them, to make them strong and manly: they have given her nothing in return, but she is not disappointed. That she is the mother of so many boys is a blessing that creeps into her heart, and gives it a peaceful throb ere it ceases to beat for ever.

The position of a woman in a Moslem village is one of the deepest degradation. In the land where the Saviour lived she is a beast of burden, or one of the articles in her husband's house. She is a "thing" bought at a price and cast off at a word. I remember once a man coming to see me in a village, thinking I was a doctor, for some medicine for his wife's eyes. He had brought her with him, but left her outside the house where I was sitting, saying, in an apologetical tone, "Your honour, the thing is without awaiting your pleasure". He was afraid to offend the sensitive ears of a man by calling her a woman.

Whenever the name of Christ is unknown or dishonoured the position of woman is abject and miser-

able. But where Christianity has taken root and flourished woman has been raised to her rightful estate as the helpmeet of man.

The Son of Man died for their emancipation, and raised them to a higher and nobler place in man's esteem.

The women of Palestine recognised His favour and realised His work when He dwelt among them. A woman was the first to love and cherish Him, a woman washed His feet with her tears, women beheld him lifted towards heaven on the cross of shame, women followed to see where He was laid, and women were the first to seek Him after His resurrection.

A few beams of light of Gospel love and mercy are being shed amongst the women of the Holy Land by the efforts of missionary societies, and if this little book can help to increase the interest of others in the Christian work of their agents it will not have been written in vain.

The first lesson that a boy learns after he can say "father" and "mother" is how to swear. Cursing is a fine art, and requires constant practice and a natural aptitude in the use of language to become proficient. It is therefore necessary to begin early, and a commencement is made with the wish that the devil may be in his father. After lisping the "Abook," as it is termed, the little rascal is patted on the head, and the elders who are present predict his future worth.

The next stage in his education is to tell a lie. When this is accomplished the first rung in the ladder of fame is reached, for "lying is the salt of man". The most prominent trait in the character of the peasant is the zeal he shows in prevarication. He never answers a question with a direct reply, but will evade the most

trivial request for information. If a man is asked on the road from whence he comes the answer will be "from behind," "min warra". When he is caught trespassing near a house and inquiry is made about his business, he will reply with a benevolent expression expanding his features, "Salaamtak," "your peace," when no doubt if he had not been detected he would have stolen some chickens.

The habit of swearing like lying he thinks must be cultivated, and care is taken to produce the most ridiculous forms of speech. It is a common occurrence for a man to beat his son and curse the boy's father. If his donkey irritates him he curses its master or its grandmother, and the religion of the camel or the devil. These are mere forms of expression and quite meaningless. But when he invokes the aid of "Allah" to cut short the life of his friend matters assume a more serious aspect, and words and phrases follow of too evil a nature to be placed on record. As a rule the Fellah means nothing beyond a desire to emphasize the statements he makes, or to show off his little pleasantries before an admiring crowd. I once heard a woman, in a quarrel, tell a man he was "a piece of dog". This was a greater insult than saying he was the whole of it, but she wished to hurt his feelings.

"By the life of my beard," "By the life of God," "By my head," are everyday expressions. Among some of the Fellaheen a man is regarded with favour if he rounds off his sentences with "Ai Wallah," "Yes, by God". He never makes a promise without adding "Ins hallah," "If God will," and frequently uses the word as an equivalent of "yes".

It is easy to understand why there should be a third

commandment, and why our Lord so often spoke against the use of irreverent language. "Swear not at all" (St. Matt v. 34). "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head" (St Matt. v. 36). Women use the same language as men, and rarely occupy a secondary place in cursing. The conversation in the house, on the road, or in the field, is often lewd, and no restraint is ever placed on the tongue even in the presence of children, so that boys and girls begin with the knowledge that comes with the maturity of mind as well as body in England. Yet in many ways, though the language is plain, it is stripped of its coarseness by the absence of thought and intention of anything immoral.

MARRIAGE.

All marry young, and amongst the Moslem peasants I have never heard of an old maid. Every girl knows she will one day be a bride and as soon as she can sew prepares for the occasion a "garment of needlework". There is no fixed time, marriage depends on means, not age. Poor men cannot afford to marry young, though there is a prospect of overcoming the difficulty raised by poverty. If a youth has a sister he can exchange her for another man's sister, and both weddings take place on the same day with one feast. The most important part of the marriage proposal is the sum offered as dowry. Amongst the poor this is really the price paid for the girl which her father greedily appropriates without the least consideration for provision or propriety, rejoicing in the discovery that a girl is of some use and value. Richer people spend it on clothing and ornaments for the bride, and she reaps the benefit. But in all cases it is necessary to negotiate for a fixed sum, and in this the

bridegroom seldom takes a part unless he is compelled to rely on his own exertions to obtain the requisite amount of money.

Parents take upon themselves the burden of providing a mate for their son, and generally the means wherewith he is able to meet the obligations of the change in his life.

The dowry varies according to the beauty, age, and rank, of the girl ; if she is young and pretty her price is high and only a rich man can expect to possess her. When the bloom on her cheek begins to fade, the initial cost of the marriage lessens, until it is possible for a poor man to raise the sum required. A certain amount of sympathy might be felt for a man without means if it were impossible for him to find a wife. But the matrimonial market contains an ample supply, and a range of price that is within the reach of all. If satisfaction is not found at the first venture, the help of a hardworking wife will enable a man to save money and buy another more agreeable to his taste.

The dowry is not always paid in cash, its equivalent in camels, oxen, or donkeys, will be accepted. On one occasion a notorious character in search of a wife agreed to give a yoke of oxen and four donkeys to a man for his daughter. They were duly delivered on the morning of the marriage, and the festival proceeded with great rejoicing. As the father-in-law was a cattle-raider, he was very much chagrined to find on the day after the wedding that he had been paid with his own animals. The action of the son-in-law was admired by all his new relations except the one he had outwitted, and he was regarded as a desirable acquisition to the family, and a remarkably clever fellow.

Among the Bedawin who dwell in tents it is the reverse that often happens, and the son-in-law has cause to be annoyed. On the day of the wedding the large blue veil of the bride is thrown over her head so that her features are invisible, and as all the women are dressed alike it is impossible for the bridegroom to be certain of the right girl, unless his mother or some female relation is present in his interest. After the procession the bride sits in the women's apartment in the dark, still enveloped in the veil. She is not permitted to speak, that would be immodest; in discreet silence she listens to the praises of the bridegroom from the lips of her companions while his friend carefully examines her. None but an unscrupulous man would venture on the hazardous undertaking of substituting one girl for another unless the helpless bridegroom had no one to take his part. And then his action would seem more like taking advantage of a situation than a desire to provoke a quarrel. Every parent knows that the older the daughter and less the dowry, and the sympathy of his tribe would be with the man who was able to part with the cheaper first, especially if the higher sum had already been secured. This happened in the case of Jacob, whose mother was far away. Of his manner of paying the dowry there are many illustrations. If a young man has no hope of raising a stipulated sum at one time, he pays by instalments, or serves for lower wages for a given period. The writer had a manservant who paid a medgedieh (3s. 4d.) a month for eight years; he began when his future bride was a little child. Though a man may elect to provide the dowry in this way he does so at considerable risk, for there is no hire system, he cannot take the girl after the first payment, and should the

father die before the last instalment has been delivered, the brother, who takes over the right of ownership in his sister, may refuse to ratify the agreement made by his father, and demand payment over again, and the love-sick swain has no remedy.

I was once called upon to arbitrate between two men who could not agree about the last instalment. A young man had promised to pay thirty Turkish pounds as the dowry, and in order to complete the amount he handed over five French gold pieces as the final settlement, saying they were worth more than the Turkish, but he was pleased to let the father have the difference because he loved the girl. This proceeding was so unusual that the prospective father-in-law demurred, and in order to satisfy himself that the payment was correct he appealed to me. I was compelled to say, in the interests of justice and equity, that there was a difference of 10s. on the wrong side, a French pound being worth 16s. and a Turkish pound 18s.

Love is not supposed to exist until after marriage. A Moslem in a town never sees his bride until the ceremony is over. In the country where the women are unveiled the betrothed pair are not allowed to see each other alone. But amongst the Bedawin restrictions are few, and maidens are wooed and won in the orthodox manner.

Marriage is far too serious for love to enter into the contract. It would be useless for a lover to declare his passion if he could not purchase the object of his affection.

Sinful love is punished with death; it is therefore a dangerous expedient for a man to tamper with the property of another man by carrying off his daughter.

Some time ago a girl eloped with a young Greek Christian from Es Salt in the Belka; they sought what appeared to them a safe and secure refuge in the camp of a Bedawin tribe where they thought no relative would follow, but the brother of the maiden became aware of their destination and started in pursuit. The gallant lover conveniently disappeared on hearing of his arrival, and his bride received her brother alone. After much persuasion she yielded to his entreaties to return to the parental roof from whence the marriage was to take place with the consent of her relations.

The return journey commenced after messages had been sent to the recalcitrant lover, but as soon as a lonely and secluded part of the road was reached the brother turned and shot his sister, then skinned her face and hung it on the branch of a tree as a warning to runaway girls. If her husband had been caught he would have shared the same fate.

There is no fear of the wife being sent back to her father when once she is in her husband's care as he cannot afford to part very readily with what has perhaps caused him years to procure. Divorce is easy enough. Should a man wish to avail himself of this means of disposing of his wife, the words, "Bi talak bi thalâti," "I divorce you thrice," said in the presence of witnesses are sufficient to annul any contract. The facility of divorce and its practice was severely condemned by Christ. It is rarely resorted to now amongst the Moslems though it is unhappily only too frequently the custom of the Jews of Jerusalem.

A story is related of a young man who possessed a pretty wife and a bad temper. In a moment of passion he lost them both. Returning home one day in an

irritable frame of mind, ready to quarrel with everybody, he was met by his wife with a look that showed her want of appreciation of his ill-humour. It added fuel to the fire of his wrath, and words and expressions were used that his favourite resented, and before he really knew what he had said the fatal words escaped his lips—"Bi talak bi thalâti". His injured spouse instantly removed to her father's house.

Her departure cooled his passion. He gazed at her retreating figure in bewildered astonishment; then, having collected his scattered senses, realized with dismay the consequences of his wanton behaviour, and turned his steps in the direction of his mother's residence to seek advice. According to Moslem law a man cannot marry his divorced wife until she has married some one else and been divorced from him.

The only way out of the difficulty was to engage the services of a reliable friend. He accordingly sought one to whom he related his tale of woe. After consultation the friend agreed to serve him, and it was decided that overtures should be made for an immediate marriage, to be followed by a speedy divorce that would enable the disunited pair to marry again.

Everything went well until the second marriage was over. A noticeable delay then appeared in the remaining part of the friend's service. The first husband called to inquire the reason and urged the "reliable friend" to send away the wife according to agreement, so that he could take her to his heart again, but he refused, saying! "Oh! no! I like her too well myself".

When all preliminaries are settled and the nuptial day fixed the people in the village are very busy. For several days before the happy event a series of dances provide amusement for the young men.

Riddles are introduced at intervals of the entertainment (Judges xiv. 12) and the whole place is alive with excitement.

The governor of the feast and his assistants arrange all the details and look after the comfort of the guests; they are responsible for the admission and entertainment of all who appear at the wedding. No invited guest would present himself at the feast without a wedding garment (St. Matt. xxii. 11).

The Wedding Garment.

The wedding garment is a bright-coloured Kombaz worn over the shirt. It is a second coat that distinguishes the holiday-maker from the workman. On that account the Disciples were sent by the Master with one coat to proclaim the Gospel.

"Provide . . . neither two coats . . . for the workman is worthy of his meat" (St. Matt. x. 9, 10). There is a regard for appearances in the East. A gay and festive occasion demands recognition by a change of clothing. If a man is invited to the marriage of a person in the same rank of life as himself he is able to supply his own raiment which might under other circumstances be entirely out of place. A dress worn with advantage in the kitchen would be eminently unsuitable in the drawing-room. The social regulations of Eastern people are similar to the standard of propriety set in the West. But there is a provision made by the rich that is helpful to the poor. If a Pasha gave a feast and asked a poor relation to mingle with his friends, and sit at meat at the same time as the most distinguished of his guests, a "change of raiment" would be presented to him in order that he might not be ashamed to take his place

with the rest of the company. When a large number of men assembled in the guest-chamber of a great chief respond to the call that supper is ready they surround the board according to their appearance. The social position of a man is known by his clothing. The beggar still sits at the gate and the dogs watch for the crumbs.

While the hungry look with eager eyes for the remains of a repast the longing of the heart kindles the imaginative mind with visions of the feast. The highest glory, the greatest happiness, the most sublime peace, the beggar can conceive, is a plentiful supply of the richest food. No festival in the Holy Land is complete without a supper. In order that the Eastern mind might grasp the full significance of a great gift, of a joy surpassing all expectation, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, which made a marriage for his son" (St. Matt. xxii. 2-15), and prepared a great supper.

Before a great man would invite an inferior in position to his table some event of unusual importance must have caused him to set aside all precedent. The barriers of rank are almost insurmountable; a man can rarely climb from a place of low degree to the higher life of the people; a peasant born will a peasant remain. The unchanging East has put an indelible mark on the poor. A Fellah guilty of negligence or carelessness excuses himself with the remark, "I am only a Fellah". Christianity alone of the religions of the Orient has revealed to man equality in God. Through the mission schools of Palestine and Syria youths have passed from village homes to positions of distinction. One great fact is clearly taught in the Bible that all men are sinners. To all God has offered a great gift so that all may be saints, but many

refuse the invitation and turn away. From the life of the vilest a man may rise to be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. The invitation is issued to all; the supper is prepared, the garment is ready. No man can sit at meat unless he is suitably arrayed in the robe of righteousness which is the attire of the Christ man. Something has happened to enable poor sinful man to sit at the supper of the Great King. An act transcending all human affairs, the death of Christ, has opened the way. Through Him who is the Way, arrayed in His robe, covered by His blood, enveloped in His life, the meanest may sit at the supper and partake of the celestial food that affords spiritual refreshment for his soul. Man must "put on Christ". No raiment from earth's loom, no garment purchased at the world's mart, no merit received in the world's estimation, will suffice. The wearer would be out of place. The eternal fitness of things would put him to shame. The perceptive faculty in man even now serves a useful purpose, and he may know that if he is uncomfortable in the presence of God and His people he has entered in without the wedding garment.

The bride is placed on a camel or a horse, covered with a veil and decked out for the occasion; "As a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2); "As a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. lxi. 10); "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?" (Jer. ii. 32); "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework" (Ps. xlv. 14).

The allusions to the bride in the Word of God are illustrated by her appearance on the day of her marriage. If she has not to be fetched from a neighbouring village, a semblance of this proceeding takes place near her own

residence. She must be brought to the bridegroom's house by a numerous train. As the sun is setting the cavalcade winds slowly round the hill on which the houses stand, guns are fired, drums beaten, and as much noise as it is possible to create is a part of the rejoicing. The crowd conducts her to the bridegroom's abode to await his coming. "The virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (Ps. xlv. 14, 15). The women and girls, all except those who superintend the cooking, remain with her, waiting till the bridegroom comes.

The men assemble on the threshing-floor, the only available space for a large company; food is brought on trays and placed before them. When the meal is over a very important part of the proceedings follows; the governor and his helpers walk round the circle of guests to collect the presents—always money, which they deposit on the carpet before the bridegroom, who reclines on a raised couch in a conspicuous part of the assembly. Every man gives as much as he can afford, but by no means more than is expected. In order to stimulate the spirit of emulation, as each presents his gift, twice or thrice the actual sum is stated with the name of the giver, and blessings invoked on him and his family. If the presents are numerous and the guests are many, which is usually the case at a popular wedding, the bridegroom tarries until the last coin has been collected.

I remember the marriage of a sheikh's son near Jerusalem when 162 sheep had been killed, and eaten at the supper; over four thousand people received invitations; the festivities were therefore prolonged. Every

wedding is furnished with a large assembly of guests but it is impossible to ascertain the exact number beforehand. Extra provision is made during the feast if necessity creates a demand. The amount of wine consumed at the marriage of Cana in Galilee would convey to an Eastern mind the idea of a number of people rather than excessive drinking.

When the governor of the feast informs the bridegroom that the last present has been received, and the feast is over, he rises from his seat, and the vast concourse of people signify his departure by making a loud noise. The whole village knows the bridegroom comes and the maidens go out to meet him with their lamps trimmed and oil in their vessels (St. Matt. xxv. 1-3). Guests may have come late or left early, the women and girls that are waiting cannot ascertain, they know not the hour when the bridegroom shall appear. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh" (St. Matt. xxv. 13).

Delay leads to indifference and neglect. The significance of the parable of the ten virgins is found in the lamps of the watchers. All had lamps but only five had a supply of oil. All had the name but the wise alone were in possession of the life (see p. 88).

The City Wedding.

In the city the arrangements for the wedding and the ceremonies attending the festival differ from the customs of the village except in the matter of dowry, in which both agree. The final act is significant. When the bridegroom enters the bride's house he finds her seated thickly veiled on a chair. He must walk round her three times then lift the veil and throw it over his

shoulder to show that the government of his bride is upon his shoulder. He is not aware of the connection between the custom of his people and the Word of God. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. ix. 6). He has yet to learn that the Son of God has taken the government of His bride, the Church of God, upon His shoulder; that the dowry He paid was His life laid down.

Death.

The peasants have neither the desire nor the power to conceal their emotions. At a wedding joyous exclamations fill the air and hearts are glad. When the hand of death is laid on one of the inhabitants of a village the cry of woe pierces the soul and shrieks of distress awake the slumbering people and re-echo through the vales of the surrounding country. The women rend their clothes, tear their hair, and exhibit all the outward signs of mourning with which we are familiar in the Bible. "Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments" (Joel ii. 12, 13).

The clothes of the deceased are removed, the jaws are bound up, and the eyes closed. The Khateeb washes the body, covers it with a sheet, and places the corpse on a bier.

If the death took place in the morning interment follows the same day; but if the deceased expired in the evening the burial is performed on the following morning.

Professional mourners "that weep with those that weep" are hired to follow the remains to the grave.

"And all wept, and bewailed her" (St. Luke viii. 52). Lamentations are continued from the moment of death, and the women of the village join in the melancholy task of bewailing the dead.

A hole is hastily dug in the cemetery, the resting-place of the village fathers near by; the body is carried on a bier by the men (St. Luke vii. 14), walking at a moderate pace and chanting incessantly the Moslem profession of faith: "La illaha illallah: Mohammed rasool ullah: Sallallahu 'aleyhi wa sellem"—"There is no Deity but God: Mohammed is the Apostle of God: God favour and preserve him".

Words of praise are uttered of the dead in feeling tones as the body is laid beside the tomb, then the Khateeb calls on the spirit of the departed to answer as he would in the presence of God, and say he has been a devout Moslem. In his stead a relative replies: "He believed in one God and Mohammed the Apostle of God". The body is laid in the grave and covered with earth. Women weep at the tomb all day long, mingling with the tears that flow praises of the one that is gone (see David's lament for Saul, 2 Sam. i. 17-27). Day after day the grave is visited until a head-stone marks the place of rest. And though the women seek the tomb of the one they loved no man will venture near the cemetery after dark. The stones are white-washed to indicate the presence of the dead and remind the wayfaring man of the angel who is ever on the watch to snatch good Moslems to the realms of night. They believe he will terrify them into unconsciousness and then secure their bodies.

Night is the time for all dread spirits to carry on their nefarious work, and only the most hardened and

sceptical Mohammedan will venture out alone. The sepulchres of the dead are avoided like the plague. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (St. Matt. xxiii. 27).

Thousands of rock-cut tombs scattered over the country remind us of the past. They were made by the rich: no poor man could afford the luxury of a chamber hewn out of the rock: graves were the common home of the deceased members of a poor family. Some of the old tombs containing many chambers are exquisitely cut and represent an expenditure of means that were never in the possession of the poor.

In no place on either side of the Jordan have I seen so many rock-hewn tombs as in the neighbourhood of Um Keis (ancient Gadara), where Jesus met the man "which had devils a long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs" (St. Luke viii. 27).

Some of the old sepulchres have been cleansed and used as habitations by peasants who have left their own villages to join the new settlement. The feeling of dread has gone with the ancient custom of burial and the disappearance of the remains of the occupants. No peasant would believe a corpse had been there if the bones were not visible as witnesses.

Ancient tombs were closed by a rolling-stone that ran down an inclined plane before the mouth of the sepulchre. When this has been removed by breaking it in pieces with a charge of gunpowder, a very good house is at the convenience of any one who is sufficiently ignorant of its former use to occupy it.

AN OLIVE GROVE.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAND.

THERE are two kinds of land attached to a village: the Freehold and the Communal Land.

The first usually consists of gardens, vineyards, and olive groves, immediately surrounding the village. Where there is a plentiful supply of running water or a perennial spring the gardens are in a high state of cultivation, and furnish the markets of the towns with all kinds of vegetables, but regular care and attention is needed to keep them constantly producing a succession of crops. They are divided into little plots, twelve feet square, surrounded by trenches of earth, through which openings may be easily made to let in the water, and closed again when a sufficient supply has run over the garden patch. The water from the spring or the little brook then flows on its accustomed way until it is again diverted from its usual channel to moisten the plot. This system of irrigation is the only one that can be carried on in Palestine where no rain falls for more than six months in the year.

Isaiah refers to the sad condition of "a garden that hath no water" (i. 30). It is reduced to a patch of brown earth without any visible life. The pleasant green picture is destroyed, and cannot be distinguished from the parched hillsides and arid wastes of a water-

less region. In the truly remarkable contrast of a flourishing garden and the barren appearance of the surrounding country it is possible to realize the difference between a man dead in trespasses and sin and the life quickened by the spirit of God and sustained by His grace.

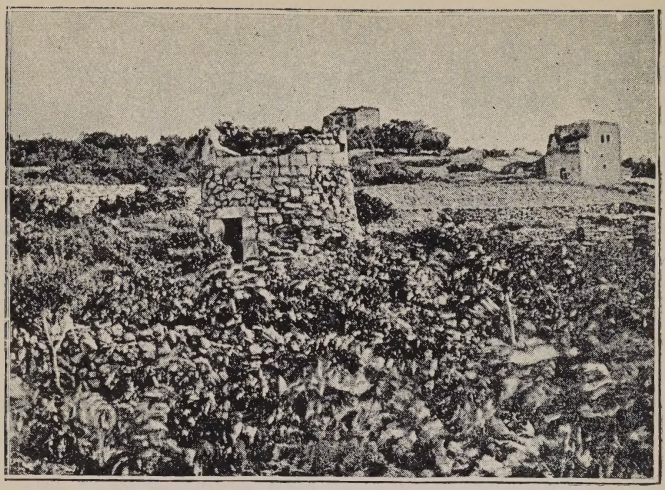
The Eastern garden supplies a forcible illustration of the spirit of God in the soul of man. "And their soul shall be as a watered garden: and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jer. xxxi. 12; see also Isa. lviii. 11).

There is a sense in which the attitude of God to man is conditioned by the attitude of man to God. If man does not turn to God as a recipient willing to be quickened by the spirit of God, if he does not maintain a constant communion with the source of life, the life-giving refreshment flows on and his soul is hard and dry and unfruitful, producing a crop of useless weeds.

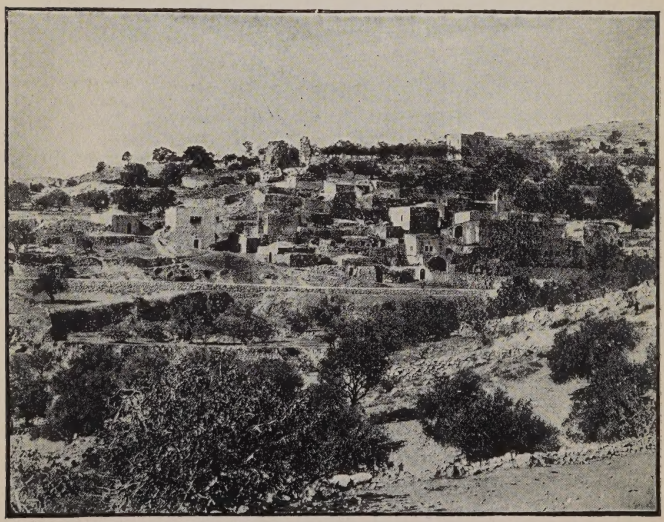
The garden near the spring with its channels and trenches shows the connection between the soul and God. They are the means of grace through which the Spirit fills the soul, making it fruitful and useful. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22) is the evidence of an established connection, of regular communion, without which there is neither life, nor health, nor happiness.

Some of the watered gardens of Palestine produce four crops a year. They may be seen in the Kedron valley below the village of Siloam.

When the vegetables are nearly ready for the market the owner hires a man to watch them. He sits under a little lodge made of sticks and covered with a mat; a temporary structure, used only for a time and then



WATCH TOWER IN VINEYARD.



BETHANY.

left, to be tossed by the tempest after the produce has been collected, a picture of desolation and distress, "left . . . as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers" (Isa. i. 8).

In the vineyard, where there is a permanent growth instead of a season's produce, a more substantial building is erected for a watchman "They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept" (Cant. i. 6).

"There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen" (Matt. xxi. 33.)

The remains of old winepresses are often seen in the hill country. Watch-towers are in frequent use, and there the watchman sits to prevent thieves from stealing the fruit, and with his gun and sling he frightens "the little foxes, that spoil the vines" (Cant. ii. 15).

The "Lot".

The communal land is allotted annually to the villagers who wish to till the soil. One man may therefore have a different piece of land every year, and a variable number participate in the division. When the time for the "lot" arrives, all who wish to take part assemble either in the medâfe or on the threshing-floor, where the Khateeb awaits them with a bag and some pebbles. On these stones he will have put a distinguishing mark to represent the names of the portions of land, the lots, about to be distributed. Many of the fields have names similar to those in use in the time of our Lord—"the field of blood," "the field of the fight," etc.

When all the pebbles have been placed in the bag a little boy is called to take them out, one too young to understand what it all means; as he withdraws each stone he hands it to one of the men until all are supplied. Immediately on receiving the pebble each man stands in an attitude of prayer and says with becoming solemnity "El hatha jarraly"—"This is my lot". He does not know where it is situated, he cannot always interpret the sign on the stone though many of them have been used on former occasions, but he proceeds to invoke the blessing of God by saying, "May God maintain my lot". A similar expression may be found in Psalm xvi. 5, "Thou maintainest my lot". When all the pebbles have been distributed the Khateeb reads their names and every man knows the portion of land that has fallen to him for the ensuing year. He will have ascertained whether his "lines (or lot) have fallen in pleasant places" (Ps. xvi. 6).

If he has a field in a fertile valley he will rejoice accordingly.

The division must then be made so that each one may know the extent of his land.

The old landmarks will serve as a guide, but in order that there may be no dispute, as some changes will be necessary on account of more or less participators in the allotment, the boundary is again marked by a double furrow, and at each end a small heap of stones is placed called "the stones of the boundary," so that the landmark may be plainly visible even if the furrow is obliterated by the rain. It is a sin to-day as it was in the early days of the Hebrew occupation to remove a landmark. "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark" (Deut. xxvii. 17).

THE SOWER.

PLOUGHING.

PLOUGHING.

The plough cannot be used on the rocky hillsides, the stones are often too big and unwieldy to remove, and the rocky surface of the ground protrudes in jagged lines that would interfere with the ploughman's operations; but an industrious peasant would not on that account neglect his "lot": he takes his pickaxe or mattock and prepares the soil for the seed, "on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock" (Isa. vii. 25).

Steam ploughs have not yet been introduced into Palestine, nor even a plough that requires the use of two hands. In England one might possibly imagine that the plural ought to have been used in the following text: "No man having put his hand to the plough" (St. Luke ix. 62).

There is clear and distinct evidence of the truth of the Bible exemplified by the implements of husbandry used by the peasants and their mode of work. They are exactly the same as those mentioned in the Bible, and have never changed but remain in the state of primitive simplicity which they occupied in the time of the Judges when the Canaanites dwelt in the land, and they shed abundant light on the historical origin of the present inhabitants.

With one hand the ploughman grasps his plough and in the other he carries an ox goad. It usually has two iron points, one broader than the other to scrape the earth from the ploughshare. The sharper end is turned towards the oxen to assist them in their movements. In the hands of a strong man it would prove a formidable weapon, equal to a spear. "Shamgar, the son of Anath, slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox

goad" (Jud. iii. 31). Young oxen are restive and unruly, being unaccustomed to the yoke and impatient of restraint. They often feel the goad and resent its interference with their stubborn will. Submission is hard to learn and more difficult to understand, hence the natural inclination "to kick against the pricks" (Acts ix. 5; see also Eccl. xii. 2).

We read in 1 Sam. xiii. 21: "They had a file . . . to sharpen the goads". The plough is drawn by a pair of oxen and no man unless he is very poor would yoke an ox and an ass together as two animals unequally yoked are a source of trouble and anxiety to others and irritation to themselves (Deut. xxii. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 14). Two cannot walk together unless they agree.

The "yoke" is a heavy and ill-shaped piece of wood placed across the end of the plough and fastened to the necks of the animals. There are many references to the yoke in the Bible (Gen. xxvii. 40; Lev. xxvi. 13; 1 Kings xii. 4; Isa. xlvii. 6; Jer. xxvii. 8, 11, 12; Deut. xxviii. 48; Jer. xxviii. 14).

It is a sign of bondage, of unwilling servitude, of a degradation inflicted by a master mind or an unmanly habit.

Man is often subject to a galling tyranny either of custom or caprice and cannot stand upright. His freedom of action is bound by limitations, his liberty is curtailed. Christ offers a way of escape. He says: "Take my yoke upon you. For my yoke is easy" (St. Matt. xi. 29, 30).

It is easy because He is the main support. And in His strength the yoke may be endured, the burden borne.

Ploughing begins as soon as the first rain has

moistened the parched ground at the end of October or beginning of November. Between the seed-time and the harvest the time is short and delay is dangerous. The change of weather from bright warm sunshine to bitter blasts tests the peasant. If his good intentions are immediately carried into effect and he perseveres with his work in spite of the cold the ploughing is soon done.

But, if he should hesitate, as the gusts of wind sweep across the hills and the rain beats against his face, and look behind him at the snug cottage he has left, the temptation to return is overpowering. He lingers for a moment then turns homeward leaving his work unfinished. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (St. Luke ix. 62). "Remember Lot's wife" (St. Luke xvii. 32).

Before he can begin to till the soil again the unfavourable weather may have interfered with his operations and the seed be sown too late for the harvest. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold: therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Prov. xx. 4).

Sowing.

The best description of a sower is found in St. Matthew xiii. 3-8:—

"Behold a sower went forth to sow: and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

"Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

"And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

"And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them:

"But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold."

After the ploughing the fields are not harrowed and the weeds are not removed. The preparation for the sowing is completed by the ploughing, and the yield to-day is in accord with the harvest described in the parable.

In the outlying districts farthest from the village the crops are always in danger of being removed by thieves in spite of the watchfulness and care of the peasant. Where the fields of the Fellaheen adjoin the Bedawin country the risk is increased. Even the seed is lost. If the peasant is very poor he sadly carries the precious corn from his house when he goes forth to sow; it requires a supreme effort to undertake a duty that unfolds no prospect of success. He cannot tell whether he will ever see the fruit of his toil, and if the corn he throws into the furrows is all he has in the world, and starvation is almost at his door, he will have no cheerful heart and may even sow in tears, as the feelings of Eastern people are very near the surface and easily moved. His joy will be all the greater if when the harvest comes he finds the corn waiting for his sickle. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. cxxvi. 5). Sowing and reaping is not only a law of nature, it is a principle of life. And by this principle all our thoughts and actions are governed.

Sowing in tears to an Eastern mind means duty

under exceptionally difficult circumstances. It is an unwelcome duty and must be performed before the enemy.

Man's highest duty is the service of God. Sowing in tears is self-surrender and the joy of reaping is found in the higher life; it is in self-denial and produces better labour; it involves self-sacrifice and yields greater love.

The people of Bashan told me that if they only reap once in two years the harvest is so plenteous they are well repaid. The greater the danger the better the reward.

We live in a perpetual present and pay no heed to the future, and if obstacles appear there is often a tendency to shirk even common duties because the future is dark and uncertain.

We sow for earthly things because our appetite for things of earth is keener and the reaping sooner. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. cxxvi. 6).

Reaping.

According to God's promise, "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22).

It is most remarkable when we come to the harvest to find how the ingathering of the corn is in every detail the same as in Bible times. "To put the sickle to the corn" (Deut. xvi. 9). "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest" (Lev. xix. 9). "When ye . . .

shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest" (Lev. xxiii. 10). "Let her glean even among the sheaves" (Ruth ii. 15). "So she gleaned in the field until even" (Ruth ii. 17).

After the harvest has commenced a portion of the field is purposely left until the rest of the corn has been taken to the threshing-floor. This is called by the peasants "laket," and "jarua," and if the owner of the corn was asked why it remained until the harvest was nearly over, the reply would be "Meshan Allah"—"for God". It is the corner of the field which with the "gleanings" are left for the poor and the stranger. "Thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger" (Lev. xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 19-22).

While each man's corn is put in a separate place on the threshing-floor, the "corners" are collected and placed in one great heap and then divided into three parts, (1) the poor, (2) the stranger, to maintain the guest-chamber, (3) the village priest.

This unwritten law of the peasants is strictly binding on every man. They are not acquainted with the Bible and quite unaware of the fact that they are acting according to the Word of God. No one would think of touching the corner even if the harvest was poor. It is that portion of his income that belongs to God for distribution amongst the needy. The unlettered Fellaheen to whom we send missionaries to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ present a picture of liberality that puts to shame the selfishness of many Christians. There are comparatively few who devote a fixed portion of their income for the benefit of others; a tale of woe might excite their compassion and produce a subscrip-

tion; a piteous appeal on behalf of some institution might engage their attention; but their generosity is regulated by selfish indulgence for which provision must first be made. The Fellah religiously gives his corner every year without any consideration for the quality or quantity of his harvest.

When the corn is standing it is an unwritten law of hospitality for every one that passes through to help himself. The same rule applies to the vineyard, and no one would ever think of trespassing on the kindness offered by carrying any away. "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn" (Deut. xxiii. 25).

The plucking of the corn and eating by the disciples (St. Matt. xii. 1, 2) was not looked upon as a theft by the Pharisees, the "*not lawful*" referred to the act being performed on the Sabbath Day, an interpretation of the fourth commandment of a purely Pharisaical nature.

The Khateeb.

The Khateeb (village priest, teacher, interpreter of the law) is a person appointed by the community to attend to the rites of circumcision and burial. He is not always able to read fluently, though of late years there has been a visible improvement in the capabilities of these useful public servants, and they now teach the children to recite the Koran and sometimes lead the people in prayer.

The Government has recently exerted some influence on the village sheikhs and elders to provide for the better instruction of the children. Their action is due

to the prominence of education as a missionary agent, and is intended to prevent any further development of missionary enterprise.

The wages of the Khateeb are provided by the peasants and paid from the "laket".

Widows and fatherless children are usually the gleaners (Ruth ii. 3), and in a particularly distressful case where a woman is but recently bereaved she is allowed to glean even amongst the sheaves.

All the simple laws of kindness and hospitality found in the law of God are minutely and carefully observed by the peasants without any knowledge of its existence. They are merely regarded as the customs of their country. If a man is induced to give a reason he looks in astonishment at the request for information about the obvious, and answers, "Min Zāman"—"It is from long," and all who are acquainted with the Bible know that what he says is true.

The Tax Collector—The Publican.

After all this help for others it is sad to see the worry and trouble that accompanies the Fellah in his endeavour to preserve a portion of the harvest for himself. All the corn of the village must be placed on the common threshing-floor and there await the advent of the tax-gatherer to assess the tax and take away his share. A peasant knows how much he has to pay for an olive grove (about 6d. a tree), but he is quite unable to form any idea of the amount of corn that will remain for his use until the tax-collector has departed with the tithe. One tenth of the crop is due to the Government for communal land, but the tax is publicly sold to the highest bidder, a speculator who expects to profit by

THE WATCHMAN.

the transaction, and after paying a stipulated sum proceeds to recoup himself for the outlay from the peasants. Before the harvest begins he rides round the district, and whether the year has been favourable or not, he expresses his astonishment at the wonderful crops, then tries to compound with the farmer for a fixed amount of corn. If unsuccessful he is at least able to form some estimate of the yield, and thus place a check on his subordinate who will afterwards fetch the tax. He would never think, if he is a man of position, of undertaking the task himself owing to its unpleasant nature, and he knows that only men of unscrupulous character can be obtained for the distasteful work, so he adopts this method of procedure for his own protection. In the time of Christ the collection of taxes was carried out in precisely the same way: they were sold to the highest bidders, "publicani," *i.e.*, "farmers of taxes," from whence the word "publican" is derived, and this name was then regarded as synonymous with "plunderer". St. Matthew, who was himself a "publican," gives us some idea of the estimation in which they were held (St. Matt. v. 47; ix. 11; xi. 19).

These men are now called "Ashar," the word for tenth, a term of opprobrium, on account of the extortionate practices of these officials, that is used to designate any grasping and merciless man.

The Watchman.

There is still another payment to be made by the peasant if his village is of any size and importance. A useful public servant, the "Natoor," or watchman, expects his allowance for being on the lookout for strangers, especially of the kind that prey upon the

labours of industrious men. He must also take care that the cattle from another village do not graze on the herbage belonging to his own community.

Trespassers must be impounded, and only returned to the owner on payment of a fine, which goes into the purse of the watchman as a reward for his vigilance.

This office is of great historical interest and is often alluded to in the Bible. "Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. cxxvii. 1). "The watchman went up to the roof over the gate into the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked" (2 Sam. xviii. 24). "And there stood a watchman . . . and he spied" (2 Kings ix. 17). "He that keepeth thee will not slumber" (Ps. cxxi. 3). "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning" (Ps. cxxx. 6).

Threshing.

The threshing-floor of the village is a large open space on the side of a hill with a hard rocky surface open to the wind. After the corn has been brought on the backs of camels from the fields, every man's portion is put in a separate place and when the tax-gatherer has taken his share threshing operations commence.

Oxen are driven round and round a circular heap of corn, free to bend their necks and eat. The word halo is derived from the Greek word for threshing-floor, ἅλωνα (halona), as all the threshing-floors of the ancients were round. The commandment in Deut. xxv. 4 is still a law respected by the farmers: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn". See also 1 Tim. v. 18.

When the straw is well broken into small pieces it is removed for the use of the cattle, "Moab shall be

Man with "Fan".

THE THRESHING FLOOR.

trodden down under him even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill" (Isa. xxv. 10), and the grain and chaff thrown together on a heap.

Another method more common in the northern parts of the country dispenses with the use of oxen. Two or three boards are fastened together, like a sledge, with pieces of iron or flint embedded in the under-surface of the wood. This "sharp instrument having teeth" (Isa. xli. 15) is drawn by a horse or an ass over the corn. The straw is cut in pieces and the ears of corn torn asunder. The word "thresh" when used as a threat in the Bible has a harsher meaning than a similar expression often accompanied by a blow in this country. "Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger" (Hab. iii. 12). "I will thresh your flesh with thorns" (Jud. viii. 7).

When the instruments are removed or the oxen taken away, the peasant then takes his fan, a fork with wooden prongs, the winnowing fan, or a shovel, and purges his floor by tossing the corn in the air. The grains fall in a heap and the chaff is blown away by the wind.

"The ungodly . . . are like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. i. 4). "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner" (St. Matt. iii. 12). "As the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor" (Hos. xiii. 3). "Let them be as chaff before the wind" (Ps. xxxv. 5). The final judgment and the destruction of the wicked are vividly portrayed in the picture of the threshing-floor.

The broken straw called "tibn" is used as food for the cattle. The wheat or barley is still mixed with the

little stones and earth of the ground from where it is taken. Tares that may have escaped the notice of the farmer must be removed from the wheat before the corn can be ground into flour or the bread would be spoilt.

Sifting is therefore necessary. It will fetch a higher price if sifted before being offered for sale.

Sifting.

This is the work of the women. The most expert among them are employed throughout the year in various households. The dexterity with which they wield the sieve establishes a reputation that provides them with a means of livelihood. Corn is often purchased in a mixed and unclean condition, and it is necessary for the consumer to seek the aid of a sifter before it can be ground into flour. The process of separation of the refuse of the threshing-floor, and the "tares," "zewan," from the wheat is eminently typical of God's dealings with His ancient people, the Jews. "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos ix. 9).

The sifter is seated on the floor; she shakes the sieve containing the grain until the chaff appears on the surface; it is then blown aside by a vigorous pair of lungs, and the stones are removed and thrown amongst the useless products of the village. The shaking is continued until the imperfect grains and earth's impurities are collected at the sifter's feet.

The prophecy of Amos foretold the painful discipline of the children of Israel. While they have been wanderers over the face of the earth, and residents in every clime, the distinctive characteristics of the nation

RETURNING FROM THE MARKET.

SIFTING CORN.

without a country, of the people without a home, have been preserved. They have been tossed, and turned, and shaken, like wheat in a sieve. This has not been done for their destruction but their purification. And from time to time individual members, one of a family, two of a city, have been received into the Church of Christ and have taken their place amongst the good wheat. The presence of the seed of Abraham amongst the nations is an evidence of the truth of the Bible that speaks with the power of a living voice, both to rebuke infidelity and the neglect and heedlessness of those who look on the Bible as an idle tale. The singular preservation of this wonderful people without example in all other history shows the special providence of God both in upholding them as a remnant of former revelation, and reserving them for fulfilments and evolutions in the scheme of the Divine administration which are yet to come.

Sifting is typical of the Lord's dealings with many of His people. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (St. Luke xxii. 31).

The bold and impetuous follower of the Lord Jesus had not yet been tested. His confident affirmation (St. Matthew xxvi. 33), was made without the consideration of circumstances other than those to which he had been accustomed. He never for a moment expected to be placed in a position where denial was even probable. When he "followed afar off," and "sat without" amongst the enemies of his Lord, the testing process was being continued with malevolent fury

Tossed to and fro in perplexity and humiliation the weakness of the Apostle's character was brought to the surface. But while Satan was determined to put him to shame and extinguish the love he bore to Jesus, the Lord prayed that his faith might not utterly fail. The devices of the Evil One were overruled by the Most High, and Peter in tears of sorrow left the high priest's palace purified by the sifting of that terrible night. Temptations and trials are often hard to bear, but the process of purification is God's method of dealing with His children as a preparation for His service.

The Good Measure.

The peasant farmer is too poor to keep his corn for a rise in the market price. It must be sold immediately and the merchant reaps the benefit. But the reputation of the middleman is almost entirely dependent on that of the professional measurer employed by him. Householders of means purchase a supply of corn for the year; when it is brought to their dwelling the measurer accompanies the vendor. This is a matter of little moment in England, but it is of the utmost importance in Palestine where the measure is a variable quantity and may be much or little according to the ability of the expert who handles the corn. In order to ascertain the contents of each sack and satisfy the purchaser before the bargain is concluded, the professional measurer empties the grain into a heap on the floor, and seating himself beside it proceeds to fill his wooden measure, the "tabbeh," shaking it and turning it to press down the corn. When it is filled to the brim, he heaps up more and more until the grains run over the

side, and then the "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over" (St. Luke vi. 38), passes into the hands of the purchaser. Unless the buyer is present to receive his corn he cannot be sure of the justice of the seller, and even when his eye is fixed on the "tabbeh" the man who so deftly wields it may deceive him. The form of expression, "Give unto your bosom" signifies pocket or bag. Peasants carry everything in their shirt above the girdle, their bosom; neither pockets nor bags have been adopted by the country people of Palestine.

Industrious Peasants.

The work in the gardens and fields does not occupy the whole of a man's time, and where there are several sons it is necessary for them to look elsewhere for employment. This is sought in many ways, and certain villages are noted for supplying special workers in the labour market; men used to occupations that are not required in their own village, charcoal burners, masons' labourers, porters, water carriers, camel and donkey drivers. The latter, found especially in the villages adjoining the high roads, are engaged in the carriage of goods and merchandise from one town to another. They travel in companies for mutual protection and comfort. At certain stages on the road, and at the gate of the city, tax-gatherers "sit at the receipt of custom" (St. Mark ii. 14), taking toll for the produce of the country or imported articles.

If a man has neither a camel nor a donkey and is very poor he will have to be content with the lowly position of labourer or porter in the city. When a builder has a number of men in his employ he needs

an overseer to watch them; they have no idea of time and compulsory service is irksome. In addition to the foreman he will engage a man with a powerful voice and a recognised talent for native music; his efforts might not be appreciated in England but they are eminently successful in encouraging the workers in an Eastern land; his song has always a refrain that can be readily learnt and the movements of the men keep time with the song: more work is accomplished, and toil is made easier by the spirited accompaniment of music.

When a man is satisfied with the amount of his earnings he leaves without notice; he may demand his wages at any time and quit the place if the work or master disagree with him. The foreman is then compelled to send to the market-place for more labourers.

CHAPTER V.

SHEPHERD LIFE.

THE pastoral life of the East is full of interest to the Bible student. The language of Divine inspiration, and the life of our Lord Jesus Christ have invested the simplicity of an obscure calling with the dignity of the Son of God.

Every detail of the shepherd's life and duty assumes an importance for the purpose of illustration and interpretation out of all proportion with the position he occupies in the Holy Land.

Being insignificant and mean, it is admirably adapted for a younger son who cannot reasonably expect a place of honour unless an accident proves his worth. A father will if possible look to his first-born for support and assistance, and for counsel to the elders of his tribe.

The patriarchal method of family government admits fatherly discretion and the sons are expected to render submission and obedience to paternal authority. But the jealousy of the brethren of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 4) is a noteworthy example of the disastrous effect of reversing the order of Oriental custom even though the subsequent conduct of the favourite proved that the father was right in believing him to be more capable of maintaining the prestige of the family.

The shepherd must grow into his occupation, begin-

ning as a boy, with no conception of its difficulties, no idea of its dangers, and no anticipation of its rewards.

The Scrip.

The mother gives the boy a scrip, a dried skin bag, in which she places bread and dried fruit, olives or cheese; occasionally a skin of water, the bottle of Scripture; and thus equipped he begins to make the acquaintance of the sheep and goats of the family near his home. If he is an only son, and there are daughters, they are sent instead; the exalted position of an only son will not be forgotten. Jethro's daughters (Ex. ii. 16) and those of Laban tended their father's sheep (Gen. xxix. 6).

The influence of association is very powerful. The solitude of the wilderness develops a secret source of strength. The intimate relationship of the helpful and the helpless establishes a feeling of mutual regard.

David came from the wilderness to slay the giant (1. Sam. xvii. 43); he left the sheepfolds to fill a throne (1. Sam. xvi. 11).

The weird wild figure of John the Baptist with the atmosphere of the desert about him stood before the profligate Herod and denounced his sin.

Moses spent the first forty years of his life in the luxurious surroundings of a court, learning the wisdom of the Egyptians, and though mindful of the degradation of his people, and anxious to promote their welfare, with all his knowledge, failed.

It was not until he had learnt during the next forty years in the solitude of the desert, tending the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro, trust in God and patience with man, that he was fit for use (Ex. iii. 1).

As the youthful peasant approaches manhood tenderness for his flock grows with his power of protection; friendship is cemented by dangers mutually shared, and hardships borne together. The sheep are often in imminent danger. Any moment their protector may have to save their lives by risking his own. The mountain torrent, armed robbers, and ravening wolves, are perils of a situation that needs forethought and courage.

The Sling.

The youthful shepherd has already learnt to use a sling. It is his "dog," his assistant, without it his sheep might easily get beyond his control. If one moves away from the flock, he puts a stone in his sling and throws it just beyond the sheep to startle and turn it. Constant use of the sling lightens his labour and saves his sheep; it makes him accurate in aim and capable of exercising his skill on any adversary that threatens himself or his sheep with destruction.

In the time of the Judges, slingers had reached a high state of perfection. "Every one could sling stones at an hair breadth" (xx. 16).

Slings have been used in war by many nations, but they were the weapons of the common soldiers; hence the disgust of the Philistine giant when he saw the mean equipment of the champion of the Israelites (1 Sam. xvii. 43).

The prowess a shepherd may have displayed in the field, the courage exhibited in the defence of his sheep, meet with no approbation. His occupation seldom gives him an opportunity of appearing to advantage before an admiring crowd. Unless he can produce substantial evidence of his skill, his account of his deeds is regarded

as a mythical tale, and any attempt to escape from his lowly position is met with derision and contempt.

"Why camest thou hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" (1 Sam xvii. 28).

The Staff.

The staff mentioned in David's encounter with Goliath is another important part of the shepherd's outfit. It is now called "Nabooty," and is a heavy club, often with a formidable head studded with nails. A hole is bored through the lighter end, the handle, so that it may be attached by a piece of string to the girdle, or when used as a weapon, round the wrist.

The staff is used for offence as well as protection, and s carried by most of the peasants around Jerusalem. When our Lord forbade His disciples to carry "staves," He wished even their appearance to be peaceful, as befitting their vocation as preachers of the Gospel of Peace. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves" (St. Matt. x. 9, 10).

Every detail of this command is illustrated by Eastern life to-day. It is well that it should be rightly and fully understood, and it will be less of a digression to explain than at first appears. A preacher who went about doing good would require none of these things.

The guest-chamber of every village is open to the stranger, where he is lodged and fed without payment. A scrip is only required where there are no habitations and no people. It is evident therefore that our Lord sent His disciples to the children of men. If a preacher appeared with bare feet, it would be a sign of humility and a sacred calling, and the absence of any offensive

weapon would commend his mission to all with whom he came in contact, and no one would molest a man known to be on an errand of mercy.

It is obvious that the spirit and not the letter of our Lord's command can be obeyed where manners and customs are entirely different. But it does not absolve His people from their duty of providing for the minister at home, and furnishing the missionary who proclaims the glad tidings of a Saviour's love in distant lands with a scrip, in which there is ample provision for his journey.

But he may require protection. Every ordinary precaution must be taken even by the minister of God. He cannot expect miracles to be wrought to indemnify him for loss of life or goods through negligence or carelessness of the natural means employed by those who brave the perils of the road. Altered circumstances, changed conditions, mean different methods.

Towards the end of our Lord's life on earth, in one of His last discourses He said to His disciples, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.

"Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

"And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough" (St. Luke xxii. 35, 36, 38).

It meant no more than the usual precautions adopted by all travellers in unsettled districts for defence of life and property. Every man who journeys through Palestine carries arms; no peasant is ever seen without a

weapon, all of which are more ornamental than useful, though their appearance is sufficient to keep away the robber who might otherwise regard the unarmed traveller as an easy prey.

The Rod.

The distinguishing mark of the shepherd is his rod, "Assayeh".

Sometimes the dress proclaims the man. Occasion may require the need of a scrip. Circumstances determine the use of a staff. The shepherd is known by his rod. It is the sign of his authority, the symbol of his care. The Rod supports, the Staff defends. When the Psalmist sings: "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me" (Ps. xxiii.), he realizes the providential care and rests under the shadow of the Most High. Experience has taught him trustfulness and restfulness. Well might he exclaim:

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

"He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. xxiii.).

The tender care of the shepherd detects any sign of

ill-health, it discovers any wound. And while it may not be possible to devote the necessary attention in the wilderness, the sick or injured sheep is not neglected. As soon as the fold is reached at night, he places his rod across the doorway and every sheep goes UNDER THE ROD. It is a time of critical inspection, of eager scrutiny. His tender gaze, his watchful eye is over each one. When the sickly sheep appears the rod falls and the animal is gently drawn by the leg towards the shepherd.

The poor thing in terror tries to free itself from his embrace, ignorant of his purpose, afraid of his intention. Its struggles cease when it can strive no longer and it submits to the pressure of the strong firm hand of the master. There is a message of unspeakable comfort in this illustration. Many a home and many a man has been overwhelmed by some dark shadow. Difficulties and trials hard to understand, and still harder to bear, have settled like the rod over the Christian. "I will cause you to pass under the rod" (Ezek. xx. 37) is a gracious promise of the Almighty God. "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord" (Lev. xxvii. 32). "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. xiii. 24). "The rod of correction" (xxii. 15), a rod for the back of him that is void of understanding. "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the rod of the righteous" (Ps. cxxv. 3). Whether it is the rod of affliction or the rod of correction, the hand that bears it is the hand of God. His eye watches in loving kindness and tender mercy the sad condition of His people.

The man of "little faith" cannot look beyond the

rod. When it falls he feels its weight and rebels against its infliction. His spirit strives, and though a sense of impotence appals him, he obstinately refuses to accept the burden as a part of the Shepherd's care. When the grace of submission moves his heart he understands, and will exclaim with Eli, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good" (1 Sam. iii. 18).

Among all the winsome names by which the Christ is known there is none more precious to the heart of the believer than the "Good Shepherd". The shepherd calls, he leads, he feeds, he keeps. Each in its own order, first the calling then the leading. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (St. John x. 4).

I remember resting a while at the spring under Mount Nebo one morning in summer, when the hillside around was covered with an immense flock of sheep under the care of several shepherds, reminding me of a former scene in the history of Jacob. "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the East. And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks" (Gen. xxix. 1-3).

When the watering was over and the sheep had to be separated, first one shepherd stood up, and then another, and called, "Tahhoo, Tahhoo"; the sheep lifted up their heads, and for a time there was a general scramble, until long lines of sheep, extricated from the common flock, slowly followed the retreating footsteps of their respective guides. They knew their shepherd's voice; it had so often sounded in their ears they were

SHEPHERD AND SHEEP.

SHEEP AND GOATS.

familiar with its tone. On more than one occasion I have used the same cry, "Tahhoo," but never a sheep would follow me. "They know not the voice of strangers" (St. John x. 5).

Association begets confidence, and a personal attachment almost inconceivable in this prosaic and practical country of England springs up between the shepherd and his sheep. He knows them all. Amongst the number, some by peculiarity of feature or deportment or character specially attract his attention, and the conspicuous appearance of particular members of his flock suggest descriptive names, "Brown-ear, Black-leg," etc.

Every detail of pastoral life illumines the Word of God, and breathes into it a vital force that illustrates the page of Holy Writ, and guides the diligent student into fellowship Divine.

"He calleth His own sheep by name" (St. John x. 3). He knows each one. The weakness and the waywardness, the wilfulness and the wantonness, every feature of every character, every detail of every life, He knows, and calleth His own sheep by name.

Clouds of sorrow may gather and hide His face. The gloom of the valley of doubt may keep me from His side. Trials may beset me, and ties of earth draw me from Him. I may question or repine, and the gate of death may strike terror into my soul, but if I discern that Voice, when expectant of its call, I shall hear it when perplexed, in the day of trial and temptation, when doubts assail and drive me to despair; and even at the mouth of the tomb. "He calleth by name." "Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping," "saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus" (St. John xx. 11-14). But when she heard His voice saying,

"Mary," she knew it was the Master. He calleth by name the sorrowful, the bereaved; and the tenderness and sympathy of His accents bring joy and peace.

"He calleth by name"—"Philip," the questioner, "Peter" who denied Him, and "Thomas" who doubted His resurrection. They knew His voice. They had become accustomed to its tone in their ordinary daily intercourse with the Master, and in the night of doubt and sorrow it calls them unto the brightness of eternal hope.

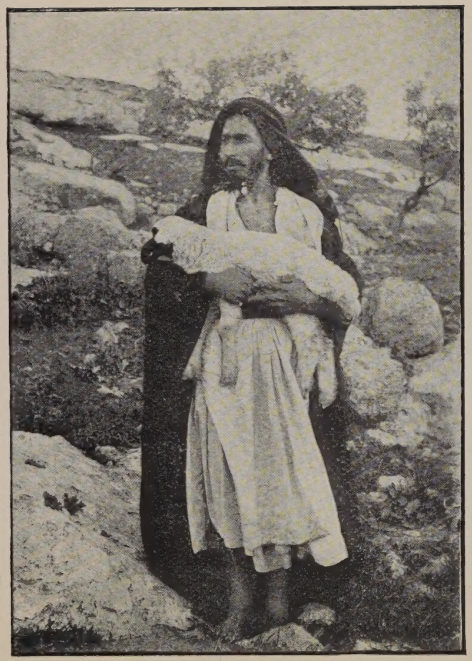
He calls to lead, and leads before He feeds. He called Peter and Andrew his brother when "they were casting a net into the sea," saying, "Follow Me . . . And they straightway left their nets and followed him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him" (St. Matt. iv. 18-22).

"And as Jesus passed forth . . . He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed him" (St. Matt. ix. 9).

"And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. . . . And another said, "I will follow Thee but . . ." (St. Luke ix. 59-61).

To the rich young man He said, "If thou will be perfect (*i.e.*, complete) . . . follow Me . . . he went away sorrowful" (St. Matt. xix. 21, 22).

There are others who follow according to circumstances. When the Christ is marched to judgment, when Christianity is unpopular, they follow "afar off".



A GOOD SHEPHERD.

THE SHEEP THAT WAS LOST.

When the shepherd goes forth and his sheep follow him, the pastures are far from home (Gen. xxxvii. 12-17).

The sheep country of Palestine is the hill country, the mountainous district familiar to Bible readers in the history of the wanderings of David when he fled from Saul. There are steep hillsides, bare precipitous crags, difficult of access, to be overcome before the green pastures are discovered. There is the "hill of difficulty," then the valley of peace; the toil before the rest; the struggle before the safety. And in every flock some sheep follow in the footsteps of the guide, others, attracted by the rough coarse grass of the wayside, wander from the pathway. And ofttimes the sheep that is apparently left behind rushes in haste to join the flock, or straying farther from it, falls down a steep place and is lost in a deep ravine.

"Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt . . . shall see the land . . . because they have not wholly followed Me.

"Save Caleb and Joshua . . . for they have wholly followed the Lord" (Num. xxxii. 11, 12).

The way is rough and the toil is arduous, but the shepherd has trod the path before and knows the road; where He leads we may safely follow. When he counts his sheep and one is missing he will not go to rest at night without first seeking that which is lost.

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
. . . . . .
And all through the mountains thunder riven
And up from the rocky steep,
There rose a cry from the gates of heaven,
Rejoice, I have found my sheep.

The shepherd feeds as well as leads. "I will feed My flock" (Ezek. xxxiv. 15). He feeds "with judgment" (Ezek. xxxiv. 16). He knows what is best and makes provision for times and seasons, "upon the mountains," "in green pastures," "by still waters".

There is no lack. The staple food, the daily bread, is the "Bread of Life". He gives Himself, and He also varies the diet. The "Bread of Life," the manna from heaven, is supplied every day. But there are times when additional food is given—"bread of adversity" (Isa. xxx. 20), "bread of affliction" (1 Kings xxii. 27), "bread of tears" (Ps. lxxx. 5).

He calls, leads, feeds, keeps.

The Fold.

There are two folds, one on the hills away from the village, common to all the sheep of the country, used by all the shepherds; and one for each separate flock at home (St. John x. 1, 2, 9).

The door of the former is never shut; the sheep go in and out and find pasture. When the hot sun burns with scorching heat they rest in the shadow of the wall, which is also their shelter from the biting blasts of wintry storm and tempest. Our Good Shepherd tells us He is the door of this fold. It is the Church of God, where all are one, and every one is free.

The village fold is closed at night and the shepherd locks the door and keeps the key.

There is never any bustle or hurry. Time is no object to Eastern people. The shepherd carries no watch. He knows the rising and the setting of the sun, the signs of the weather, and uses his knowledge of the signs of the times for the benefit of his sheep.

He gently leads those that are with young and often carries the lambs in his arms or the expansive folds of his inner garment. On one occasion a shepherd, after vainly trying to persuade his sheep to cross a little torrent, jumped over it and seized a lamb and crossed again. The mother sheep went after him, followed by the remainder of the flock.

Goats as well as sheep sometimes accompany the shepherd. They differ in character as well as appearance. While the sheep browse on the lowlands the goats skip about the rocks of the hillside. They are more venturesome, less easy to keep with the flock, and more impatient of control. They separate themselves from their more timid companions out in the fields, and when the shepherd stands with arms outstretched at home they naturally walk on one side and the sheep on the other (St. Matt. xxv. 33).

There are hirelings amongst the shepherds. Every one has not attained that excellency of character and disposition depicted in the unselfish devotion of the owner of the sheep. Amongst those entrusted with the care of the sheep there are many unworthy of confidence and esteem. They must account to their master for every animal. If one has been seized by a beast of prey some portion of it must be carried home for examination. "As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, etc." (Amos iii. 12; Exod. xxii. 13).

Wages are paid in kind. The custom beyond Jordan is similar to the payment made to Jacob. A young shepherd receives one lamb in every ten born in the flock, and two changes of raiment. In this way he accumulates a flock of his own (Gen. xxx. 28-35).

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARKET-PLACE.

THE market-place of the East is that part of the city where the produce of the country is exposed for sale. There is no precise spot similar to the market of an English town. The open streets near the gates, or wherever business is transacted, are all included in the comprehensive term, Es Sûk—the market. Some streets however are specially noted for the sale of particular commodities, and the bazaars in the centre of the city are designated by the names of the articles most frequently sold within.

But the Sûk possesses a feature equal in importance to the interchange of money and goods; it is the favourite place for conversation and gossip as there are no newspapers that chronicle the events of the day and the affairs of the province. The seclusion of the harem, and the entire absence of that public social life so noticeable in an English city, tend to make the Sûk a meeting-place of all people for all purposes except strife and disorder. Hostile feelings are suppressed for the moment, polite speech and pleasant manners hiding the sinister motives that might be displayed in the open country. A truce is declared in the public thoroughfare where business and pleasure occupy the attention of the multitude (Ps. cxxvii. 5).

The varied scenes are enhanced by the picturesque

THE MARKET-PLACE.

costumes of the people, and these very naturally attract the attention of the visitor, while the incessant clamour of the crowd and the shrill cries of the itinerant merchants might prevent a more careful examination of the numerous incidents that would interest and even amuse him, and throw into relief the manners and customs that have from time immemorial belonged to the inhabitants of the Holy Land. To the lover of the Bible they are of the utmost value, illustrating phases of life that have no counterpart in the West, where the daily life of the people is so widely different.

The colours of the garments from sombre brown to brilliant crimson illumine the dull grey streets and garish walls of the city. The forerunner marching in front of the representative of some European king is arrayed in garments covered with gold or silver lace. The swarthy Bedawy, with his long white robe and mantle of black, unaccustomed to the pavement saunters with wondering gaze at the gaily attired natives who invite him to purchase what under ordinary circumstances he would take by force. The white garments of his companions look more conspicuous in the dark setting of their outer cloaks, and remind of the words of the Psalm which describe the result of a battle where multitudes of slain look "as white as snow in Salmon".

Camels, donkeys and people seem at times in a hopeless tangle. The donkey-boy, as he belabours his poor beast with a cudgel, cries, "Oo-ah, oo-ah," *i.e.*, "Get out, get out," and "Ya dahrak," *i.e.*, "Your back," meaning, "Get out of the way". And if you turn round to see what is behind you, a porter with a heavy load shouts, "Oo-ah, oo-ah, ya wajak, ya wajak," "Get out,

get out, your face, your face," and you have to turn again in front.

There are no carriages or carts; no vehicle is allowed to enter the city gates without the special permission of the governor of the city, consequently all merchandise and heavy articles are carried by porters who share with the beasts the burdens of their neighbours.

The Weary and Heavy Laden.

The sight of a porter with his heavy load very naturally suggests the sin-laden object of the Saviour's pity; and scenes like this appeal more readily to the feelings when acquaintance is made with the men themselves. They are drawn from the lowest ranks of the people, the poor and outcast. Many of them are peasants whose evil lives have become so obnoxious to the people of their village that they have been turned adrift, and step by step have fallen to the lowest depth of degradation, as companions of the dogs of the city streets. "Going to the dogs," has a literal meaning in the East where these animals have no home but the street, and no subsistence but the refuse. The loving eyes of the Christ looked on the outcast, and the pitiable face of the porter appealed to His tender heart, and His gracious invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (St. Matt. xi. 28; see also Gal. vi. 2, and St. Luke xi. 46), revealing the love of God, has awakened many a response from sin-burdened souls.

The Water Carrier.

For six months there is no rain, and water is scarce and dear towards the end of a long dry summer. "Ya

THE PORTER.

atshaneen, ya atshaneen," cries the vendor of sherbet as he tinkles two brass dishes and carries the beverage in a skin bottle. The water-seller's appeal for customers is still more forcible as he pushes his way through the crowd—"Ya atshaneen, ya atshaneen tahal y ishrab moyah ya belash"—"Oh ye thirsty ones, oh ye thirsty ones, come and drink of the water for nothing." "He that believeth on me shall never thirst" (St. John vi. 35; see also vii. 37, 38), and Isa. lv. 1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth," etc.

Figurative Language.

The use of figurative language is common in every-day life, and the street-cries abound in forms of expression that are altogether unknown in a Western city.

The shopkeeper has a firm belief in the providential care of God, and when he opens his shop in a morning he will invoke His blessing on the business of the day in these words: "Ya Fattah, ya Haleem; Ya Razak, ya Kareem." "O Opener of the day, O Gracious One; O Restorer of property, O Bountiful One."

"Ya Zeitum iklib lemun". "O olives, turn into lemons," is the chant of the olive-sellers.

"Hasherah beidah, ya belash". "Eggs (and cakes) for ten paras." "O for nothing," cries the lad with bread.

"Ya awlad il Halal was salah ala Muhammed, wa ili shaf ihmar agwar wa halwano medgidie". "O, children of right dealing (good people), let prayers be said to Mohammed, whoever saw (*i.e.*, knows anything about) a one-eyed donkey (lost) his reward shall be a medgidie (3s. 4d.)"—the call of a town-crier after a lost donkey.

"Ya belash, ala una, ala due, medgidie wa rubba, ya

belash." "O, for nothing, going, going (fresh offer), a medgidie and a quarter, going for nothing," is the cry of the itinerant auctioneer. In buying and selling a better idea of a close bargain is seen in the cattle market. As soon as a man asks the price of any animal we begin to realize how true to nature were the dealings of the Patriarchs, *e.g*, Abraham's purchase of the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. xxiii. 4), etc.

There is no fixed price. He must therefore be prepared to spend an hour or so in order to complete a purchase. A high price is asked and a low one offered; after the wasting of a variety of language during which the animal will have been offered to him for nothing several times over a price is agreed upon and the bargain closed. I once saw a butcher buy an ox for two medgidiehs (6s. 8d) and it could walk! Unless it has been stolen, no ox is ever sold until its life's work is over and it can pull the plough no more.

The Salutation.

If a master wishes his servant to hurry when sent on an errand and not linger by the way to talk to his friends and relations from the country, he adds to his injunctions, "Salute no man by the way".

Many people have been astonished, and sceptics have sneered at this saying of Jesus. They are not acquainted with the customs of the country, and imagine that a salutation is merely a pleasant smile of recognition, an inclination of the head, or grasp of the hand. If a peasant could see an Englishman hurrying to catch his train in the morning, and watch him move his head on one side as he passed his friend, and was told he had saluted him, he would laugh.

THE SALUTATION.

LABOURERS IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

No Fellah, not even a beggar would be guilty of such an act of discourtesy, as it appears to him. If he meets a man on the road he says, "Marhabbah," *i.e.*, "Blessed is he that cometh," and the response is, "Marhabbah 'tain," "Twice blessed". When he walks through the street, and espies a friend that he has not seen for some time he rushes up to him, bowing several times, with his hand moving first to feet, then heart, and lips, and head, as a reminder that all are at his service, then, if he is dear to him, falls on his neck and kisses him ("He ran and fell on his neck and kissed him," St. Luke xv. 20), shakes him by the hand and the two sit down. Half an hour at least will have elapsed before their complimentary speeches and questions are over, after which they rise, embrace and depart. Time is of no importance, so they never hurry. But the Master's business is urgent; the Gospel message must not be delayed; He says therefore: "Salute no man by the way" (St. Luke x. 4). The command deprecates, too, the use of meaningless compliments that seek to convey a false impression. "Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places" (St. Mark xii. 38).

The Scribe.

The scribes of to-day are known by their clothing, and the inkhorn in the girdle, as in days of old, not by a brass plate on an office door (Ezek. ix. 2). They will be seen in the market-place looking for clients. They consider extreme politeness a part of their stock-in-trade, just as it is necessary in England for some men to "appear well" as they say "to create a favourable impression". The scribes in the modern market-place do not

occupy the same exalted position as the scribes in the time of Christ; they are writers of petitions and letters, and not necessarily learned in the law, though a certain amount of legal knowledge is required to fulfil the conditions of the local government regarding contracts and matters relating to the sale of property.

As soon as one is approached he draws from his inkhorn his reed pen, dips it into the sponge filled with ink at the other end, places the paper, which has been drawn from his bosom, on his hand, and writes whatever is required without even sitting—a "ready writer" indeed (Ps. xlv. 1). Neither office nor desk is required, everything being carried on the person.

When the letter or petition is finished, the sand or dust in the street is scattered over it, then blown away; a handy substitute being near, no blotting-paper is ever used. Nor is there such a thing as a signature; the peasant cannot write, and even if he could, he would still seal the document with his ring like his betters. There are many references in the Bible to this method of using the ring and only one mention of a signature (Dan. vi. 9) and there it means seal. When Pharaoh gave his ring to Joseph (Gen. xli. 42) it was a sign that he could act in his stead, having in his possession the seal for all official papers and deeds. Nearly every peasant wears a ring with his seal on it; if he does not own such a mark of distinction he dips his thumb in the ink and presses it on the paper instead.

The scribe is most frequently employed in writing petitions, as no suppliant can make a personal application to the Megliss (Council), or a Government official in the Seraglio, he must present his case in writing, duly sealed and stamped, however trivial.

The Rulers in the Market-Place.

Notwithstanding this, there is a means of approach for those who have money without in the first instance bringing a petition. It is, of course, unofficial, but often of greater benefit than numberless petitions. Members of the native council with influence for good and evil are found in the market-place. They are willing for a consideration in kind to listen to the troubles and trials of unfortunates, with a view to helping their case when it is brought before the court—a pitiful remnant of the rulers alluded to in Acts xvi. 19: "Drew them into the market-place unto the rulers". Nothing official is done in the market-place, nor anywhere else, unless something unofficial can be accomplished as well.

Justice is administered by the Kadi and his assistants somewhat irregularly. The former is usually recalled after three years' service, as he has then saved enough of his "earnings" to keep him in retirement, or buy a better berth. Very little regard is ever paid to the liberty of the subject, and many a man is cast into prison for some imaginary offence against a superior in position, and as often released before he appears before a judge. There is a saying amongst the Fellaheen that "a man is not a man until he has been in prison". Criminals are often kept a considerable length of time without trial, and the longest sentence ever given, and that for murder, is fifteen years. When a murderer has been caught red-handed by the mounted police, or surrenders himself through fear of the avenger, he is often allowed to sit in a quiet street near the market-place, with his wrists fastened in a long piece of wood, and receive alms from the passers-by

He is thus enabled through the pity and sympathy of the people to procure enough food, which in addition to the scanty fare of the prison will keep him from starvation while awaiting his trial and final incarceration. When all is over and he is on his way to a penal settlement to suffer for his deed, he is taken through the market-place and exhibited with a placard on his breast giving details of his crime to the gaping crowd. Many return to their homes before their term of imprisonment has expired, if friends are willing to interview the rulers and satisfy their exorbitant demands. One of the peasants of Liftah, a village near Jerusalem, has committed five murders and served his time for each.

Civil litigants often weary of waiting, settle their cases out of court by the aid of some mutual friend or friends, regretting exceedingly they ever took them in. And often when the court decides, it is usually in favour of the man with the longest purse.

False witnesses are attached to every court as the necessary appendage of Turkish justice, and no petition is ever received without some outlay on the part of the suppliant.

Children in the Market-Place.

Coffee shops may be seen in some quiet corner where men may sit and smoke, away from the bustle and noise of the street. An audience is here provided for the itinerant musicians whose efforts are more generally appreciated by action than offering. A skilled performer on a flute or a stringed instrument is capable of moving the men to tears or laughter. A weird dirge-like tune will cause their heads to droop and their conversation to cease; a livelier air lightens their features and they

gaily respond in the graceful movement of an Eastern dance. Care is thrown aside and for one brief hour the light-hearted peasant enjoys his visit to the town. "Children" is a favourite expression of a good-humoured man when in blithesome mood he talks to his companions. There is a familiarity about it which is pleasant and appropriate to the time when the heart is light and filled with innocent glee.

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

"And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." (St. Matt. xi. 16, 17, 18, 19).

Labourers in the Market-Place.

Men in search of employment stand in groups waiting to be hired. Labourers in the market-place form one of the special features of the city. When a man is required for the performance of any kind of labour, a servant is despatched to call him. Application is not made by the seeker after work; he waits until it comes to him (St. Matt. xx. 1, 3).

Tables of the Money Changers.

The money changers regulate the currency of the city, which though based on a piastre, a coin now in

disuse, fluctuates like the shares on the London Exchange. They are the street bankers and sit behind tables covered with a wire net.

There is a striking resemblance between the money market of to-day and its condition in the time of our Lord. Rome was then the alien power that controlled the city to which numbers of Jews flocked from various countries bringing with them coins unsuitable for the Temple tax.

Travellers and pilgrims from all lands resort to modern Jerusalem, whose destinies are shaped by the Ottoman ruler of the Turkish Empire. The coins of various countries must be exchanged for current Turkish money. The business of the Seraf (money changer) is profitable, and none but those who have been educated by experience can hope to understand the intricate methods of the "Serafin". A French 20 franc piece = 109 piastres, but 20 franc pieces are only worth 105 piastres. The difference is equal to 7½d. As "francs" or their equivalent vary in value according to the country from whence they come the uninitiated traveller can scarcely escape without loss in dealing with money changers.

Our Lord "overthrew the tables of the money changers" which he found in the Temple Courts (St. Matt. xxi. 12).

Women in the Market-Place.

Women from the villages sit on the pavement selling eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit and fuel (roots of trees). No one ever sees their husbands with them. The wife must carry the load alone, she may not walk by her husband's side, but meekly follow behind him. He

never offers to carry her basket, though she may have a child astride her shoulder, and another slung in a hammock at her back. But if she has a donkey to help her with her load, he will ride the donkey and allow her to walk after him with the burden.

She has her reward. At least she is permitted to keep whatever she earns by her labour. She may own a cow and sell the milk, breed poultry and dispose of the eggs. The proceeds are her own. Every coin is carefully stored. Her savings bank is her necklace or headdress, where she deposits all her wealth, adding coin after coin until there is quite an array of silver.

The distress and terror in the mind of a woman having lost one when she had only ten pieces of silver can be better imagined than described by an acquaintance with the condition of life, toil, and sorrow, of the poor women of the East. The woman in the parable sought diligently until she found it and then called her neighbours together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost".

Hidden Treasure.

A man is equally fond of money. If a group of peasants were passed on the road their conversation would contain some reference to money. It is a subject of perennial interest, a source of infinite joy, and, next to possession, imagination provides an entertainment for the comtemplative mind or talkative companion. Every piece of money upon which a man can lay his hands is put in a safe place. Many a man has been known, when seized by thieves, to suffer torture rather than reveal the hiding-place of his wealth. He has submitted without flinching to severe punishment

rather than pay a fine. Only when his son is about to be taken as a conscript to serve in the army will he despairingly and reluctantly withdraw from his treasure-heap the sum required to buy him off. He trusts no bank, he places no confidence in man, a little earthen jar securely buried in a hole in a field is the method of banking he adopts.

Recent discoveries have shown that this is an ancient custom; allusion is made to it by St. Paul in speaking of the spirit of God in the believer when he says: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. iv. 7). The body conceals the hidden treasure of the grace of God from the eye of the natural man.

The slothful servant put the sum he had received in a hole, "digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money" (St. Matt. xxv. 18).

Achan adopted the ordinary methods of Eastern people when "the Babylonish garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold are hid in the earth" (Josh. vii. 21.)

The common practice of depositing money in the earth is connected by tradition and practice to people and country. Wherever any digging or excavation work is being carried on, no explanation will persuade the peasant that the recovery of treasure is not the object of all the work and search. The "treasure hid in a field" (St. Matt. xiii. 44) is so common in the Holy Land that systematic digging has to the native mind but one end in view.

Coins in large quantities, chiefly of small value, have been found in the country round Jerusalem. Occasionally a small jar containing shekels or other valuable coins is unearthed and the belief is strengthened that

more remains for the fortunate digger. A diligent search is then instituted throughout the region where the discovery was made. Menservants and maidservants in the towns will leave their employment to engage in the search. Solomon compares the eager pursuit of hid treasure, which is seldom gained, to the desire for heavenly wisdom, which never fails. "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. ii. 4, 5).

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

CARE sits lightly on the Fellah; his wants are few; and labour being irksome he is never in a hurry to undertake unpleasant duties; his motto is never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow. He beguiles the weariness of waiting by talking about the work he ought to have done, and will gladly avail himself of any opportunity to enjoy the benefits of social intercourse and the pleasures of a feast.

SINGING AND DANCING.

Whenever there is a feast music and dancing form part of the entertainment. The return of the prodigal son was signalised by mirth; when the elder son came home from the field "he heard music and dancing" (St. Luke xv. 25). The art of singing is crude and uncultivated. Songs are never set to music. A sweet singer may have a harsh and unmelodious voice, but if he is able to charm his audience by delicate allusions to the beauty of a bride, the valour of a bridegroom, and extol the virtues of the host whose hospitality he enjoys he will always receive a hearty welcome.

The peculiarity of Oriental notation is the division of tones into thirds. These small gradations of sound in a song give the impression that the singing is always in a minor key. Three or four notes suffice for one or

two lines of a song, and these are constantly repeated. The words are more important than the music at a festival. But on the road the camel-driver unable to compose is content to dwell on one word which he can sing for an hour. "Ya lailee, ya la——il——e——e——e——" "Oh! night," which might be construed by a roysterer into, "I won't go home till morning".

Love songs are common and can easily be sung to the same tune.

The Psalms of David were originally sung. The songs of to-day faintly resemble them in character, but the poverty of sentiment though embellished by extravagant language cannot be compared with the inspired words of the sweet singer of Israel.

Musical Instruments.

Instrumental music usually accompanies the singer; where that fails the clapping of hands is substituted. The instruments mentioned in the Bible are found in the towns and villages of modern Palestine.

The "harp," an instrument of many strings called the Khanoon, is associated with all festivals and a skilled performer will make the heart of man rejoice. When the Jews were in captivity the memory of the past recalled the glad songs of home and country. "They hung their harps on the willows" (Ps. cxxxvii. 2). They could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land.

The "pipe" is the favourite instrument of the shepherd. If he lives away from streams where reeds grow tall, he makes a double flute of the pinion bones of a vulture, and buys a mouthpiece when he goes to town. David's fame as a musician was noised abroad

because of the extraordinary achievement of a shepherd displaying the skill of a harper.

The "viol" in the hands of a peasant is a primitive instrument with one string.

The "horn," the Hebrew shophar, is not used by the Fellaheen; it is the instrument that called the Israelites to battle and to worship, and is still found amongst the Jews of Jersualem.

"Drums," "cymbals" and "timbrels," the principal being the Tarrabookeh, form the village band, and meet with the greatest favour because they make the most noise.

All musical instruments were originally connected with the worship of God. In the land of Israel they first lost their significance and were used at drunken feasts (Isaiah v. 12).

At every season of mirth, when the heart is light, and merriment the order of the day, music is introduced, and singing is the customary form of enjoyment.

Dancing inevitably follows. As a pastime it differs both in form and character from the English custom. Men and women never dance together, and when we read of dancing in the Bible it is well to remember Eastern manners and customs. Gaiety of feeling whether secular or religious is shown by a movement of the feet and hands and lips. Emotions in the East are strong and overpowering, and no attempt is ever made to control them. The movements of the dancers are not confined by any artificial fashion; some are wild and fantastic, others slow and graceful, according to the feelings of the performer. The text, "Let them praise His name in the dance" (Ps. cxlix. 3), would mean nothing in England. But the vigorous move-

ments of Eastern men and women convey a meaning that is absent in the regulation dance at a ball in this country.

Riddles.

There is a further means of entertainment that engages the attention of the young peasants which reminds us of Biblical times. "And Samson said, I will now put forth a riddle" (Jud. xiv. 12). "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (xiv. 14).

Riddles are still "put forth" at weddings. Here is a common one:—

> Black as night, it is not night;
> It cuts its wings, it is no bird;
> Damaged the house, it is no mouse;
> It ate the barley and is no donkey.
>
> *Answer.*—The ant.

Feasts.

Two religious festivals are kept in a greater or less degree of observance by Fellaheen—the "Feast of Atonement," "Eed el Kebeer," *i.e.*, "The Great Feast," and the "Feast of Ramadan," "Eed Ramadan". The latter precedes the movable fast of Ramadan, the Moslem Lent, of which little notice is taken by the peasants; they prefer the feast.

Both feasts have the same general features—the assembly of relatives who may have been in a distant part of the country, the sacrifice of a sheep or goat, and a good dinner.

The Khateeb composes a sermon and delivers it in public to as many as feel religiously disposed. His functions on the day of atonement are evidently copied

from Nehemiah viii. 6, from whence the attitude of the Moslem at prayer is taken. "With lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (see p. 49).

The directions in the tenth and twelfth verses are more carefully followed. "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared."

The Great Feast somewhat resembles the Feast of the Passover of the Jews and their Feast of Atonement; like most of the Moslem religious ceremonies it is a mixture of Judaism and the superstitious instincts of tradition modified by the ritual of Mohammedan law. The festival itself is held in commemoration of Abraham's contemplated sacrifice of his son—not Isaac, but Ishmael, according to Moslem teaching—and is kept when the Hadj, the pilgrims, are bringing their sacrifices to Mount Arafat, six hours' journey from Mecca.

When the lamb has been slain by the villager, the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled on the doorpost, and an olive branch is fixed over the door as a sign of peace. There is no religious ceremony and there is nothing in the mind of the peasant but a desire for enjoyment and a fervent wish to see everybody as happy as himself.

The Samaritan Passover.

The Samaritans, the oldest and smallest sect in the world, numbering less than two hundred, still worship on their holy mountain overlooking Jacob's well. The woman of Samaria said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain" (St. John iv. 20).

The Passover ceremony is the most interesting of all

THE SAMARITAN PASSOVER.

their ordinances and conducted on the plan set forth in Exodus xii.

Their tents are pitched as near as possible in two lines; the oblong tent of the tabernacle, being the most important, is fixed close to the place of sacrifice, which is next to that of the high priest Jacob. On the evening of the ninth day of their sojourn in the holy place, and the fifteenth of the month Nisan, the men having already prepared the lambs for sacrifice by care and constant washing (Exod. xii. 4), the final preparations are complete. The men and boys are dressed in white cotton shirts and trousers, and the women who remain in the tents put on their best clothes.

Fire is placed in a trench opposite the tabernacle, over which two caldrons are fixed containing water, which is gradually heated during the reading of the law. Near the end of the trench, away from the tabernacle, there is a circular pit, bordered by loose stones, about six feet deep and three feet wide, in which a fire is kindled for burning the sacrifice.

Two hours before sunset the male portion of this congregation assemble in the tabernacle, with the exception of the "Shochetim," the young men whose duty is to kill the lambs and watch the boiling water, and two others who attend to the fire in the pit. The "law" is then read with their faces turned towards the ruins of the temple on the top of the mountain. Many visitors from the town of Nablous and the surrounding country cluster round the white-robed men to witness the proceedings, some of whom have come with the intention of creating a disturbance. Officers and soldiers from the Turkish garrison are there to preserve order, a necessary precaution which has to be purchased by a substantial payment from the

slender purse of the Samaritan community, unless they are prepared to abandon the feast.

At sunset the reading of the "law" is finished, and as the lambs are brought to the "Shochetim" the remainder of the Samaritans gather round the victims. At a given signal each lamb is seized, thrown on its back, and the knife drawn once across its throat. The blood spurts from the wound, the Paschal lamb rolls over, and after a brief struggle expires. A shout of joy rises from the Samaritans, and counter cries of derision from the Moslem spectators, who have been trying to push their way into the enclosure protected by the broad backs of the faithful band of worshippers.

The foreheads of the boys who form the inner circle are smeared with blood; and the men embrace and kiss each other, rejoicing, with hearty congratulations, that the lambs of their redemption have been slain. After they have been carefully examined by the high priest, to see if properly killed and without blemish, and pronounced dead, boiling water is taken from the caldrons and poured over them; the young men then set to work and pull off the wool. When this is done the entrails are removed and burnt near the end of the trench, and the carcases prepared on spits—poles about two yards long—for the pit of fire. After they have been put into the flame a cover of wet earth is placed over the mouth of the pit to keep in the heat, and the roasting continues till midnight.

The men then adjourn to the tents, and the boys amuse themselves in various ways considered suitable for a festive occasion.

All meet together in their respective families to eat the unleavened bread and bitter herbs, which are offered to visitors as well, if friendly and well disposed.

From the high priest to the humblest Samaritan all are pleased to talk about their festival, and answer questions with evident pride and gratification at the interest taken in their ancient custom.

Few strangers linger on the mountain to view the final scene, when all stand round the smoking masses of meat as they are brought from the pit, and with loins girded and staves in their hands they hastily swallow every morsel of the lambs roasted with fire (Exod. xii. 10, 11). On no account will they give a portion of this precious food to any but their own people. It is said that on one occasion a Moslem stole a piece but was instantly seized and his throat tightly held until it was squeezed out.

The number of lambs slain varies according to the number and means of the people. Poor families join together for one, while those who can afford it provide a lamb for the family. At the time of my visit seven were killed and eaten.

As there was a large number of onlookers who could with difficulty be kept from interrupting the sacrificial service it was deemed prudent to omit the sprinkling of the doorposts with blood. In spite of every precaution the tabernacle was torn down; and the disorder would have increased and imperilled the feast itself if the men had left the slain animals before they were deposited in the fire. Yet an excuse was available for this act of omission. The high priest told me that for two reasons it was unnecessary; first, because there was no longer any need to particularly mark the dwellings of his people on account of an impending disaster; and secondly, that the blood of the last year's sacrifice was still visible on the tent poles.

The Feast of the Passover of the Jews.

This is the commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage. In the arrangement of the feast and the manner of distributing the unleavened bread little or no change has taken place for many years. The Paschal lamb is absent, but a knuckle is placed on a dish to represent it.

A cup of wine is first drunk in a leaning posture, and thanks returned for it, and the day. The hands must then be washed; if they are dipped into water wiping is unnecessary, but if water is poured over them, a towel is required. The table is then spread, if it has not been done before, and the knuckle placed on a dish for the Passover lamb, three cakes of unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, usually lettuce, endive and wild celery, though five kinds are enumerated, to put them in mind of the bitterness of their sojourn in Egypt. Two dishes of meat are provided. These may be composed of broth and rice, fish, eggs, or two kinds of flesh. It is necessary to partake freely of these before the unleavened bread is eaten, so that very little of the latter will suffice to fully satisfy the appetite. A dish of thick sauce is added, made of figs, dates, raisins and vinegar, called Kharoseth, supposed to resemble the clay of which the bricks were made. The father of the family, or the one who officiates, dips some of the herbs in vinegar, gives thanks, and eats. His example is followed by all who are seated round the table; then the dishes are removed to enable him to discourse on the object of their gathering together, and satisfy the curiosity of the women and children who are supposed to ask for an explanation. He narrates God's merciful dealing with

His people Israel, and compares an ordinary meal with that about to be again set before them. He begins, "How different is this night," then continues the explanation. At other times any kind of bread may be eaten but on this occasion unleavened bread alone; bitter herbs only may now be consumed, and boiled meat instead of roasted or stewed. The hands are washed twice and the position at table is a leaning one; at other meals the hands are washed but once, and any position may be assumed.

The dishes are then brought back, and again placed on the table, after which he who conducts the ceremony says: "This is the Passover, we eat because the Lord passed over our houses in Egypt". "These are the herbs we eat," etc. (holding some in his hand). "This is the unleavened bread," etc. (grasping a piece). The 113th and 114th Psalms are then said, and the second cup of wine drunk. A piece of unleavened bread is then broken and placed on another to remind them of the poverty of their forefathers in Egypt. The meal then follows, with thanks, and a third cup of wine. Meanwhile a place has been reserved at table for the Prophet Elijah, and a cup of wine set before the vacant seat. The door is now opened to admit him, and while he is supposed to be invisibly present in their midst, the following prayer is offered aloud: "Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place" (Ps. lxxix. 7). "Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them" (Ps. lxix. 24). "Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the

Lord" (Lam. iii. 66). The fourth cup is then filled, and Psalms cxv., cxvi., cxvii., and cxviii., read, concluding with a special prayer and the drinking of the fourth cup of wine.

The following are some of the reasons given for the *four* cups of wine:—

Rabbi Johannan believes four are used in allusion to the four words used in reference to Israel's redemption, *viz.*, bringing out, delivering, redeeming, and taking. Rabbi Joshua observes that they refer to Pharaoh's cup. "Pharaoh's cup was in my hand." "I pressed them into Pharaoh's cup." "I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand." "Thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand." (Gen. xl. 11-13).

Rabbi Ben Levi thinks they are in reference to the four monarchies mentioned in Dan. vii. Other Rabbinical writers say they represent the four cups of vengeance that God will make the nations of the world drink. "Take the wine-cup of this fury at My hand" (Jer. xxv. 15). "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand" (Jer. li. 7). "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup" (Ps. lxxv. 8). "This shall be the portion of their cup" (Ps. xi. 6). And the four cups of consolation prepared by God for the children of Israel. "The Lord is the portion . . . of my cup" (Ps. xvi. 5). "My cup runneth over" (Ps. xxiii. 5). "I will take the cup of salvation" (Ps. cxvi. 13)—two are here meant.

The wine for the Passover is mixed in order that it might be pleasant to the taste, and not less than a fourth part of a quarter of a "hin" must be taken. Though no outside limit is prescribed, no devout Jew would think of drinking to excess at such a time.

The Evil Eye.

The most widely circulated superstition in which the inhabitants of Palestine universally believe is the "evil eye," and its ability to injuriously affect everybody and everything that comes within the line of sight. Mohammedans, Christians and Jews fear its baneful influence, and use all kinds of charms to break its spell. No one is exempt from the ill effects of this great and dread power. They believe it causes sickness, sorrow and death; that it can throw down houses, break ploughs, kill animals and plants, wither young corn, and work all kinds of mischief. There is no limit to the extent of its sinister motives and its insatiable longing for all manner of iniquity.

Certain persons are notorious for being the means of its mysterious influence. They may not be conscious of the possession of this inherent malice unless the person supposed to be afflicted becomes well known for the injurious effects of his presence, and then evident indications of dislike to his company compel the simple and superstitious peasant to admit that he has been the channel through which the calamity has passed.

The potency for evil is attached to those who have blue eyes, and their glance is sufficient to act on the object of vision without any conscious feeling of malevolent power. Some people are considered to be better mediums for its transmission than others, and the effect is more fatal than in ordinary cases. When once a person is suspected of possessing the "evil eye" he is carefully avoided. A poor and inoffensive old man living in a village near Jerusalem was so feared that all who saw him turned out of his way, for rumour said

that neither man nor animal would survive the disastrous effects of his glance; even standing corn or a field of beans could be ruined when he was angry.

The safest cure for the stroke of the "evil eye" is to take a bit of clothing from the man or woman through whom the pernicious element passed, and burn it below the person struck. The fumes will immediately remove the ill effect. Another method adopted by the Mohammedans is to take a piece of tamarisk wood, and a Christian a portion of a palm branch used on Palm Sunday, and for either or both a pinch of salt or alum, and place it in a pan on the fire. The person affected must walk round it seven times, and as soon as a crackling sound is heard the spell is broken. To praise anything, particularly a child or a horse, will cause at once some misfortune, and even if sickness should follow sometime after, it will be attributed to the words of favour. A beautiful child is never openly admired without the formula, "May God encompass thee," a phrase that is supposed to exercise a protective influence over the little one. If perchance some European unacquainted with the superstitious ideas of the peasants should pat the offspring of a friend on the head in the presence of a native nurse, the woman on reaching home will take the child into a room, place it on the floor, then collect some dust on a shovel from each of the four corners, and throw it on the fire exclaiming, "Fie on thee, evil eye". "Mashallah!" literally, "What has God made!" is the common expression of admiration. No one would venture to praise in precise terms any object of interest.

Blue is the colour most favoured to counteract the influence of the "evil eye," and no child is ever seen

without blue beads fastened to its clothing. Small glass hands of the same colour are also worn for the same purpose.

Many poor Jews in Jerusalem have a large white-washed hand over the door of their dwellings—"The Hand of Might"—to protect the inmates from misfortune and death.

Christians often wear a piece of the true cross (?), or a relic of some saint in a little tin box. Moslems believe that a wolf's tooth will keep away cholera, and the dental instrument of a shark is a wonderful charm.

Ghosts and Evil Spirits.

Mr. Philip Baldensperger, a native of Palestine of European extraction, who has made the folklore of Palestine his special study, gives the following account of ghosts, ghouls, etc., in the Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement, July, 1903, p. 204.

"The Jân live underground. They have a Sultan (who is dead, so that there is now a kind of interregnum), and governors, courts, etc., just as on earth. But their courts are just, and their judges take no bribes, owing to the holiness of Palestine. They do not appear often. In Egypt they are seen very often. The principal difference between them and us is that they neither plough nor sow, they must take their victuals from human creatures. All food places are guarded by them, but they can only take wheat from the threshing-floor, or bread from the oven when men move it without saying the first sentence of the Koran. They are most active at sunset. Whistling attracts them. The oven and the fire are their favourite abode, therefore a person quenching the fire without saying

the above-mentioned words is beaten by them, either lame or simply stunned.

"They live below the threshold of every house, and women may never sit there. During the month of Ramadan they are bridled and put behind a mount in Jebel el Kaf, but as soon as the morning prayer of the Wakfe is said, they get loose, and rush to the houses in search of food after their thirty days' fast, and salt is strewed before the houses to prevent them from rushing in. Salt is holy.

"King Solomon had power over the Jân, and with their assistance he built the walls of Jerusalem, Baalbec, etc. The king had been dead forty years when the Jân discovered it. The Jân intermarry with human creatures. Such people are always solitary. In some cases the Jân never quit human company. For instance, a man in my service, about twenty-five years old, would never stay out in the fields by night, because his Jânie regularly visits him, and he was very much afraid of her. He could never look at a woman and smile, for his Jânie was very jealous, and had several times thrown him on the ground.

"Another man in my service had beaten his wife; she fell on the fire hearth, and immediately the Jân took hold of her, and tried to entice her to follow him to Egypt, as there they could live openly together, whilst in the Holy Land that is not proper.

"A Jân one day stood in the way of a man, and would not let him pass. He three times told the Jân to go out of his way, but the Jân only repeated mockingly the words after the man, who then lifted his stick and killed the Jân. A shoe was found into which the body of the Jân had turned, and all at once the Jân rushed

at the murderer and dragged him underground to the court of the Jân to be judged. At the inquiry the Jân told the judge minutely what had happened, and the man was pronounced not guilty and released. As he was coming away he saw a washerwoman of the Jân, and poured out the water for which he received a flogging, and was told never to pour out water without calling on the 'Merciful,' the same as when he quenches fire. When the man came again to earth he told everything, and these rules are strictly observed by the mass of the people. Many think the Jân to be Mohammedans, and believe they are under Mohammedan law."

There are according to the Fellaheen many spirits besides the Jân, and various charms are used to keep them away.

The "Mâred" is a tall spirit that appears where some one has been killed. To "lay the Mâred," dust is sprinkled by the manslayer over the blood of his victim; but there is another reason for this proceeding, "Dam butlub dam," *i.e.*, "Blood calls for blood," is a common saying that urges the necessity for it.

Blood Feuds.

As far back in Bible history as the fourth chapter of Genesis, verse 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground," we find a text that bears on this Arabic proverb. And in Gen. ix. 5, "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man," we recognize a resemblance to the "law of blood" now in force in Palestine. See also Numbers xxxv. 33, "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood it defileth the land; and the land

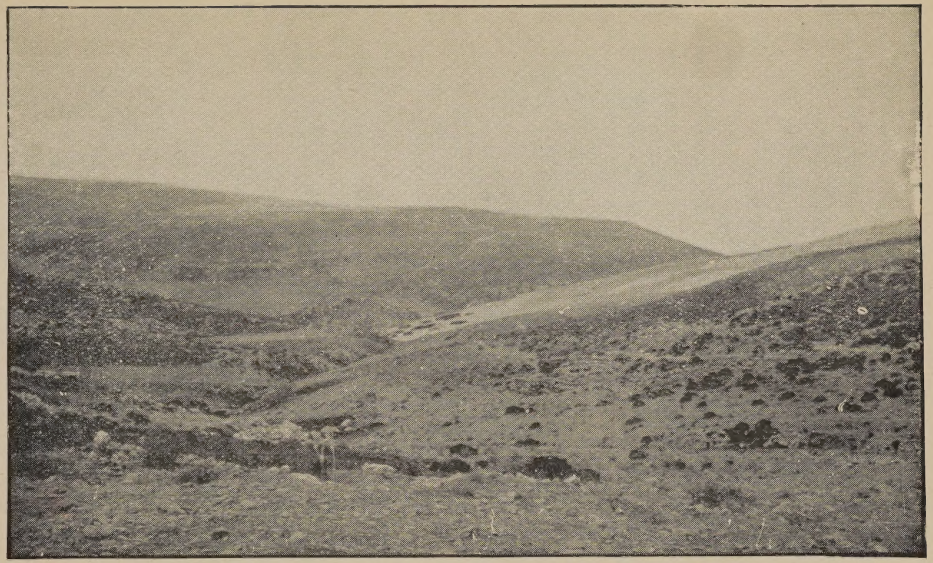
cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. ix. 6), is an injunction that is strictly observed at the present day. The mark of blood is invariably hidden by covering it with dust; if it is on the person the stain is washed seven times so that no trace of it may lead to identification.

The "Mâred" calls for vengeance; it is the spirit of him whe died by an act of violence, the innocent victim of man's hate.

Job in the bitterness of his soul cries, "O Earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place" (Job xvi. 18). In Ezekiel xxiv. 7, 8, God declares His judgment on the people in the forcible language that is now interpreted by Oriental customs lingering in the untutored hearts of the people of Palestine: "For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust:

"That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered."

It is a duty of paramount importance for the nearest relative of a murdered man to take instant vengeance. Should the murderer escape for a time, unless retribution is made by a substantial payment, his fate is only delayed (Num. xxxv. 19). The spirit of revenge is kept alive, and waits but for the opportunity that will sooner or later appear. If the murder has been a brutal one it is the right and proper proceeding to take the life of the first member of the murderer's family that may be met. The feud then increases in



WADY HESBAN—MOAB.
A SMALL BEDAWIN CAMP IN THE DISTANCE.

intensity and many lives are lost before the cry of blood is appeased.

The lawless acts of the turbulent Fellaheen and Bedawin of Palestine vividly recall the dark ages of the early history of the children of Israel. The primitive customs remaining in the land to-day remind us of the unhappy condition of the country when God was forgotten. They reveal in a most striking manner the low estimate of human life in the times of the Judges (see Judges v.).

As God in the days of old provided cities of refuge into which the manslayer could flee for safety, there are certain laws for the protection of the men whose hands have spilled the blood of their fellowmen. These laws for the preservation of man are as binding as the act of revenge itself; they may be broken, but not with impunity; they may be disregarded, but only under circumstances of unusual importance or great provocation. But in all cases might is right, and what appears to be a vicious deed may be regarded from a different standpoint as a necessary act of human sympathy or justice.

When a murderer enters a house or tent and partakes of any kind of food, whilst in that dwelling, under that roof, whether of earth or hair, he belongs to the family of the owner, who will protect him, often at the risk of his own life. I have myself sat at the same trencher as two men engaged in a blood feud who ate with apparent friendship in another man's tent, but as soon as they left one of them hastened to place a convenient distance between himself and the avenger. When a man receives food at the hand of another he is safe, but this security does not bind those who eat of the same dish.

The deed of Judas was made all the darker by his eating the sop from his Master's hand (St. John xiii. 26), for in the same way that the giver of food thereby offers sanctuary, the receiver is doubly expected to abstain from acts of treachery and violence.

Why Jael Killed Sisera.

A very plausible explanation has been offered for the exoneration of Jael, who murdered Sisera, by asserting, without any warrant whatever, that the fugitive must have forced his way into the women's apartment of the tent, and thereby placed the honour of Jael in jeopardy. To save her character she killed him. It was quite unnecessary for Sisera to desire any other shelter than the tent of Heber the Kenite; that of any tent would have been sufficient under ordinary circumstances. He would be safe from his pursuers even if they overtook him at the door, unless the chief had not sufficient power to protect him. Besides the Bible says, "She covered him with a mantle" (Jud. iv. 18).

He would be therefore out of sight of his enemies if they looked into the tents in their pursuit. The part of a camp that offers the least security from a foe is the apartment reserved for women; it is the object of every raid. Women and girls are constantly being carried off by the younger members of a tribe who cannot afford to pay the dowry of a bride. Naaman's wife had a little Hebrew maid that must have been taken captive in a foray. And even the mother of Sisera expected her son and his company to return with "every man a damsel or two" (Jud. v. 30).

We must look for the explanation of Jael's act and Deborah's blessing to the Word of God. The murderous

deed forcibly exhibits the lawless character of the age in which they lived, and should not be judged in the light of our own advanced stage of civilization. It is inexplicable to many devout people how so foul a stain could be wiped away in the religious fervour of an inspired prophetess of Israel. But there is a lesson of serious import that should move the heart of every Christian when the motive is examined. The blessing of Jael must be taken with the context. It must not be removed from the cursing of Meroz. The two stand together.

The men of Meroz were God's chosen people. He was their Ruler and they should have been found in battle against His enemies. "But they came not to the help of the Lord" (Jud. v. 23).

Jael was a heathen woman whose dark mind had not been illumined by the spirit of God. Her tribe had been associated with the children of Israel since they were in the wilderness on their way to Canaan, some knowledge of the Lord of Hosts would therefore have been gained by individual members, but only in accordance with the manifestation of His will in the lives of His people. This was poor indeed, for gross darkness overspread the land and few of the chosen race served their Lord. They signally failed to witness for Him with that clear shining that would have penetrated the regions round about, and the people with whom they came in contact.

Poor heathen Jael was an exception. She had a dim and imperfect idea of the God of Israel, but a keen sense of the conflict constantly going on between good and evil, between God and His enemies. A war was being waged between Israel as the people of God and

a nation which threatened to destroy Israel. The enemies of Israel were the enemies of Israel's God. God was thus identified with His people. The cause was not merely the existence of Israel as a nation, but that of Divine truth and righteousness. According to the usages of her people Jael must give shelter to Sisera; he appeared to her not merely as a fugitive seeking safety, but as the enemy of that God whom she but slightly knew. If he survived, his hostility to God would continue. For God and right, then, she must cast aside the traditions of her race, the conventionalities of her situation, and rise above her surroundings, to destroy the wicked who fight against God. The stern principle of justice with its limitation of view to the present life moved her heart to raise her hand and kill the man in her power. It was a barbarous deed. We deplore its execution. But it lifts the heathen woman above her people and places her in a position of eminence that carries with it an example of a zeal for God's cause that puts our feeble efforts to shame. She acted up to the knowledge she possessed. And Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, is blessed "above women in the tent" because "she did what she could," while Meroz, the men of Meroz, who knew the Lord's will and did it not, stand accursed (Jud. v).

In the roll of heroic deeds of the dark ages the name of heathen Jael will stand for ever, casting a glow of radiance over the shadows of nature's night. The dispensation of the Old Testament was inferior to the New. Modes of thought and actions were permitted that are explicitly condemned in the Gospel. Passionate prayers for vengeance that interrupt the flow of spiritual meditations in the Old Testament are often

A BEDAWIN GUEST TENT.

a feeling after the Divine government of the world and spring ultimately from a zeal for God's cause.

In hatred as well as in love the man who fears God must be wholly on His side.

We have learnt under the dispensation of the Spirit to distinguish between the sinner and his sin, but of old the two were identical. And it was necessary in compassing the death of one to destroy the other.

The Refuge.

The idea of refuge runs through the pages of the Book of Life. God reveals Himself as a retreat and in order that He might be understood provides for the safety of the sinner while on earth in the various means depicted in the Old Testament. The form has been left in the customs of the East. The principle is known only to those who have fled for safety to God in Christ Jesus.

If a man hurrying to a safe retreat in consequence of a deed of violence is overtaken before his destination is reached, there is a refuge for him by the way. The name and reputation of a chief extends far beyond his tent, or the limits of his camp; and should a fugitive when about to be slain by an avenger call on his name, declare himself under his protection, the arm of vengeance will not light on him, if there are witnesses near to convey the message to the chief whose aid has been invoked. And this custom must have a remote origin for though the semblance remains the reality is found in Joel ii. 32: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered". And David in 2 Samuel xxii. 4: "I will call on the Lord . . . so shall I be saved from mine enemies". The Psalmist sings (Ps. xx. 1, 7): "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee".

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." In Proverbs xviii. 10 we find: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe".

If the suppliant's call, "Ana dakheel Sheikh," etc.—"I am the protégé of Sheikh ——" is unheeded, and he falls a corpse at the feet of the avenger, it is the duty, that must not be disregarded, of those present to carry the tidings to the chief, and his reputation will compel him to keep his honour untarnished by immediately taking steps for the execution of the man who dared to touch his protégé. "It is God that avengeth me," says David (2 Sam. xxii. 48).

I remember once meeting a peasant on the hills of Gilead, in the neighbourhood of Um Keis, carrying at the end of a spear a white flag, saying, as he passed me on the road, "This is the honour of the great Sheikh of the Wulid Ali," and I saluted it accordingly. Some little time before, the man informed me, he had cause to leave his village and flee to the Bedawin, having in a quarrel slain his neighbour. The brother of the murdered man followed, and overtook him in the district where the chief of the Wulid Ali tribe of Bedawin is a great power. Before he could take vengeance, the murderer had sufficient presence of mind to call, "Ana dakheel es Sheikh Mohammed es Smeir," and as witnesses were near he was safe. The name of the sheikh of the Wulid Ali was his protection, and he was free. It therefore remained for him to testify to the people of the district the power and might of the great sheikh.

The Psalmist, remembering the power of the Most

High and realising His might sings: "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions" (xx. 5).

If the man had been killed a black flag would have been taken to the sheikh as a sign that his honour and name had been insulted.

Some years ago the peasants in the hill country south-east of Jerusalem, the Diasy and Sahwâry, quarrelled and fought. An appeal was made by mutual friends to a very important and influential citizen of the Holy City, and an armistice concluded for six months, to enable him to examine the points in dispute.

Before the time had expired the Sahwâry attacked Abou Dîs, the home of the Diasy. The chief of the latter therefore carried a black flag on a spear to Jerusalem to show that the honour of its citizen, the arbitrator, had been set at nought. His decision included an indemnity of 33,333 piastres (about £245), the price of a life, to pay for the broken faith of the Sahwâry.

The amount here fixed is generally regarded as prohibitive between man and man and equivalent to the statement that he will not barter his kinsman's blood for gold.

In the old days, when Madeba became the refuge of the destitute and resort of the vagabonds of the Belka, murder was so common that a fixed tariff was instituted to regulate the payments for limbs as well as lives, beginning with £46 for the life of a man or his sword arm, down to a small sum for his little finger. But only those would take advantage of this scale who were the outcasts of society, the outlaws of the tribes, calling no man lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FUTURE OF THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE.

THE manners and customs of the people of the land show they are living witnesses of the truth of God's Holy Word. But they are ignorant of its precepts, and unaware of the good tidings of salvation it declares.

Our happy condition, the prestige of our country, the wealth at our command and our future hope have all been given to us by the light of the Gospel.

The Gospel that has elevated the inhabitants of Christian lands to the position they now enjoy first came from the Holy Land: the Bible that tells us of a Father's love issued from the same source, and we are therefore indebted for all that is good and holy through God to this land.

This thought should quicken Christian hearts and move them with grateful love to consider the needs of the birthplace of missionary enterprise.

Of all the countries of the earth the Holy Land has the greatest claim on Christian sympathy. The difficulties that have to be encountered and the disabilities under which missionaries are compelled to labour call for the earnest prayers of the Church of God.

The returning Jews with hearts touched by the memories of the past are ready for the impression of the love of Christ. But their rigid adherence to the Talmudic teaching of the traditions of men excludes

the knowledge that might be conveyed by the history and association of their nation's home.

The settled Mohammedans of the towns, and the simple peasants of the hills and valleys of the country, are bound by rules of conduct or superstitious fear.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. x. 3-14).

During the last few years thousands of Jews have returned to the homeland, and colonies have been established in many parts of Palestine. Their immigration reminds us of the entry of their forefathers into the country from the wilderness, and the downfall of their nation through false worship. Can we to whom the truth has been delivered withhold our interest? Dare we remain inactive and unconcerned when we know what God has done for us and them?

Even the Sultan is taking an interest in the development of the land. Across the Jordan there are colonies of Circassians whose presence is due to the enterprise and hospitality of the ruler of the Turkish Empire.

There is a promise of a change in the aspect of the country. But there is little hope for the people unless the missionary societies working in the land are strengthened by increased support. The citadel of Mohammedanism cannot be taken by force of arms, it must be won by the power of the Gospel. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

If a merchant or shopkeeper in the Holy City who never sells without asking a higher price than he expects to receive, and loves a bargain, wishes his customer to understand that he has named a price that will not be altered, he says: "Kelim Inglese," "the English word," because the word of an Englishman is unchangeable and sure.

The prestige of our country, the honour of our great name, and the glory of God, are maintained in Palestine by the Christian missionaries. The societies they represent deserve the earnest attention and liberal support of all who speak the same language and serve the same Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

The schools, hospitals, industrial homes, orphanages, and churches, are proving a blessing to both Jew and Gentile, and exhibiting the love of God in a way that opens the minds and hearts of the people for the Gospel message.

Freely ye have received, freely give, and the land of Israel, the earthly home of Jesus, the scene of His labours, and the place of His death and resurrection, shall be won for Him.

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